THE COMMONWEAL

A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts and Public Affairs

Volume XV | New York, Wednesday, April 27, 1932 | Number 26

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Smith at the Anvil 701
Week by Week 703
A Plea for Convalescence 705
How To Get Economic Planning...Ernest F. DuBrul 707
Catholic Leakage .....John A. O'Brien 710
To a Cricket in a Country Church (*verse*) .....
Marjorie Murphy 712
A Political Empire Disappears..M. Grattan O'Leary 713
Albert, the Saint of Science: II....H. A. Jules-Bois 714
Holy Hour .....Joseph Clancy 717
Genius and Local Color .....John A. White 718
California Poppies (*verse*) ..Martha Banning Thomas 718
Which Way Opera?.....Grenville Vernon 719
King's Riddle (*verse*)...Francis Beauchesne Thornton 720
Communications 720
Books .....Jerome G. Kerwin, George N. Shuster, Catherine Radziwill, Boyd-Carpenter, John A. Lapp 722

Previous issues of THE COMMONWEAL are indexed in the *Reader's Guide* and the *Catholic Periodical Index*.
Published weekly and copyrighted 1932, in the United States by the Calvert Publishing Corporation, Grand Central Terminal, New York, N. Y. United States: $5.00; Foreign: $6.00; Canada: $5.50. Single Copies: $.10.

A SMITH AT THE ANVIL

ONE THING is certain—that when Alfred E. Smith proposed a twenty-year war-debt holiday, and coupled it with a possibility for ultimate settlement which would stir world trade activity to new life, he spoke on behalf of more than six million able-bodied and unemployed Americans, and on behalf of countless more millions whose peace, security and ability to continue a modest existence are gravely and increasingly menaced.

He did more. He turned the hose of common sense on the consuming political fires of opportunism and evasion. He forged a tool of sanity which can unlock the gates of restoration. He dared to mention what no other avowed presidential aspirant has had the courage to discuss. He took the whispered hints that have emanated from Washington from time to time and converted them into a bold statement of imperative action. He spoke as a man whose sympathies are rooted in the tragic conditions of his own country, but whose vision can encompass a world problem in terms of hard Yankee practicality. It may easily be that Mr. Smith's action has removed the last chance of his availability as a Democratic candidate. Or it may prove that he has immeasurably increased his stature, even in the eyes of those who felt his abilities were limited to domestic budgets and the power to fight prohibition. One might fully agree with the New York *Times* that he has reëstablished the power of an individual in shaping the course of national life, and still feel that his own fortunes and the lesson he has given in leadership are quite unimportant compared to his main achievement. That, as we see it, was the laying before the entire American people of an issue that can no longer be evaded without terrifying consequences.

The current business depression is no mere cyclical wave, such as we experienced in 1920 and 1921, nor in 1907, nor in 1893. It is—and this must be squarely faced—a turning point in world history. It is an economic upheaval with vast moral implications, both as to the death and tragedy it brings with it, and as to the imperative demands it makes on the human conscience to reëstablish a new order: demands to wipe out the infamies which brought it upon us, to set up new principles of social justice, new standards for economic order, and new methods of organizing the partnership of labor and capital toward meeting human wants and human rights. It is the kind of upheaval which will again bring before the world such urgent

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moral demands as those contained in the great encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI—not as mere moral platitudes, but as the awesome insistence of millions of human beings who have been denied the right to live in decency or even with the comparative security of slaves. It is an upheaval which, by its very nature, will demand the translation of moral ideas into the strongest of practical realities—among them the ideas of right and wrong in the matter of debts and the new and manifold forms of usury.

One thing, at least, stands forth clearly—that the total burden of world debt is such that the present activity of human beings cannot support it. One after another, huge corporations in our own country have found that fixed debt burdens, including fixed interest charges, have not only wiped out all the rewards of equity capital, but have wiped out, too, the power of capital to employ men. With the loss of man power, human activity diminishes still further until the integrity of the debts themselves is menaced. Polite words are used, "receiverships" and "reorganizations." In the deluge of adjustment, life savings are wiped out, employees with years of honest service lose even the equity of their fine record. Ownership passes from hand to hand, and responsibility of men to men vanishes in a tangle of legal phrases. Not all forms of debt place such a vicious burden on our society. Some debts were incurred within reason and for productive purposes, and, if they were not incurred in the criminal orgy of "boom" times, can eventually be met. But other debts have been foisted on the world for anything but productive ends. Among them are the debts of war.

It is easy enough to say, with a fine show of national pride, that war debts are peculiarly debts of honor and must be paid. But not only does this statement come most ungracefully from the chief creditor; it also comes with sheer stupidity and inhumanity when it is evident that the cost of collection is $10.00 for every $1.00 collected, and that that cost must be paid by those least able to pay it, those dependent on the continued activity of industry for their merest livelihood. The dismal facts are that we have lost nearly $3,500,000,000 of annual foreign trade, that this trade was the "marginal excess" which, under our highly geared industrial mechanism, made profits possible and domestic debts supportable, and that, with the disappearance of profits and the appearance of deficits, the whole avalanche of unemployment, further contraction, further unemployment and threatening bankruptcy has come upon us.

Two questions remain. What relation has the payment of some $250,000,000 of foreign debt annually to the loss of $3,500,000,000 of foreign trade? And, if the relationship appears to be direct, how can we assume that the forgiving of those annual payments would restore the lost trade and the lost human activity of the world?

As to the first question, it is obvious that if the debts are to be paid at all, and without bringing endless economic slavery upon the debtor nations, they must be paid out of earnings which can be taxed by the debtor governments to produce the necessary revenues. To build up its own industries to a point of sufficient earning power, each debtor country has tried to restrict imports and increase home markets. This was the only free avenue, since the United States, as creditor, refused by its high tariff the other alternative of receiving payment in foreign surplus goods. Thus foreign debtor countries have tried to use their purchasing power at home wherever possible, because $3,500,000,000 used at home might conceivably furnish the taxable resources to raise $250,000,000 for debt payment. In other words, the reduction in our exports represents almost exactly the minimum saving of foreign buying power necessary to maintain surplus taxable business activity within the boundaries of those countries.

The problem could also be stated in the less familiar terms of foreign exchange, namely, that the only way in which those countries could pile up balances here for debt payment would be through increasing their exports to us and diminishing imports from us. But whichever way it is stated, the essential fact is the same. We have lost the all-important foreign demand for our industrial and agricultural products in almost the exact proportion necessary for debtor countries to save the apparently small item of $250,000,000 a year for debt payment. That they are still unable to make the payments is merely part of the general phenomena experienced equally within our own borders—that each new burden narrows the vicious circle of deflation, increases unemployment, diminishes business turnover and leads to general bankruptcy.

The second question thus becomes increasingly important—namely, how can we assume that either temporary or permanent forgiving of the war debts would stop the vicious circle of world-wide deflation? This is where the peculiar advantage of the Smith plan appears. Mr. Smith has not proposed a cancellation of indebtedness. Instead, he has suggested that if the debtor countries resume purchases in the United States, instead of reserving them entirely for the home market, this country will credit each nation on its war debt account with a definite percentage of the amount of goods it purchases here annually. This, of course, removes the need under which those countries now labor of taxing the profits of their own industries to raise the debt payment funds. Let us suppose, for example, that a debtor country is now imposing a 2 percent sales tax on domestic industries to meet war debt service. This might easily amount to 10 percent of potential industrial profits. Under the Smith plan, the debtor country could dispense with the internal sales tax, increase by that fact the net profits of its industries, increase enormously the purchasing power of its people, and thus give them ample means to revive their former rate of purchase of American products.

At the same time, through the revival of the marginal export trade, the profits of American industry

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would be restored to a point many times in excess of the $250,000,000 of present theoretical debt receipts. It is on the strength of this restored American prosperity that we could well afford to make a generous credit allowance on war debts for every dollar's worth of goods sold each year to debtor countries. To cancel war debts outright, without some such provision to encourage a resumption of world trade and a reduction of war-like tariffs, might mean nothing but a blank check to Europe to press destructive competition still farther. But a debt suspension, with ultimate settlement conditioned on world-wide economic coöperation, is a far different matter. The whole war debt question, with its strangulation of industry and men throughout the world, has been of fundamental importance ever since the illusion of boom-time profits disappeared. Today its equitable and immediate settlement has become nothing less than an imperative condition precedent to any emergence from what we now recognize as a supreme economic crisis. Yet the politicians and the government have been afraid to speak of it except in whispers. Mr. Smith's voice has rung out with clarity and common sense. Whispering is no longer politically possible. The issue is joined. If that service should prove to be the summit of Mr. Smith's personal achievement, it will still rank very high in the history of this country and of the tortured world.

WEEK BY WEEK

WHATEVER comes of it eventually, the clash between Mr. Gibson and M. Tardieu at Geneva has been a very good thing. The stand taken by the first, on behalf of the United States, proceeded on the assumption that existing treaties have more than a literary value and that the next steps toward disarmament must be efforts to strengthen those treaties, especially the Kellogg Pact. Wars of aggression have been outlawed. Very well. But nations are still afraid of such wars, because some powers are armed with weapons which render defense well-nigh impossible. These weapons include tanks, gases and heavy mobile guns. Accordingly, argued Mr. Gibson, these must be relegated to the scrap-heap. They are, he averred, not merely the causes of great nervousness among peoples but also exceedingly costly and destructive. The whole address was refreshingly to the point and leads one to believe that at last America has found a man able to say what he wants in tabulated form. Virtually all the other important European powers endorsed the proposal, even Switzerland forgetting its customary good manners and coming out for the Gibson idea. Thereupon M. Tardieu replied even as he had to. During the past six months the entire French press, including even relatively harmless reviews, has preached the doctrine of resistance to dangerous anti-militaristic "propaganda" soon to emanate from the conference. Such schemes as Mr. Gibson's are absurd, impracticable and unfair, urged M. Tardieu. The only way out is to arm the League of Nations. Since even he can hardly believe that this idea will be taken seriously, we are back to the hoary hypothesis of French scepticism on the subject of armaments. But the knowledge that his country is isolated in its views of this important question can only become less and less reassuring to the citizen of Paris or Lyons.

At Geneva

ARGUMENTS anent the impending budget balance continue unabated. One's impression is that Congress has acted with more dignity and consistency than the President. Asked to offer a plan to reduce the cost of government, the House Committee responded with what under the circumstances looked like a carefully thought out program of cuts and retrenchments hinging on an 11 percent salary reduction. Mr. Hoover's counter-suggestion was an exceedingly dubious proposal to maintain the existing wage-scale while instituting what amounts to a month's vacation without pay. This looks good on paper, but it takes for granted the existence of ability to save enough to tide over a workless month, for all the stipulations that the less well-paid employees are to take their "cuts" in the form of a five-day week. Meanwhile Mr. Mills's objection to the pending tax bill is also lacking in definiteness. His arguments against certain provisions in that bill were understandable. But, as we observed at the time, the Mills reasoning was aimed primarily at the difficulties involved in budget balancing. Thus a sorely divided and perplexed world confronts the observer of political life in Washington. The one important step taken is the Federal Reserve Bank's action in committing itself to increase the sums allotted each week for the purchase of government securities. Whether or not the directors of the system were spurred into motion by the threat of legislation now before Congress, their decision is timely and encouraging.

The Ways of Washington

PERHAPS the two most interesting themes up for discussion during the week have been international indebtedness and the soldiers' bonus. The first, as injected into politics by Alfred E. Smith and into civic thinking by various speakers, among whom former Ambassador Alanson B. Houghton is possibly the most important, is dealt with at greater length elsewhere in this issue. The second is already a major political issue, despite the official quiet which prevails on the subject. Potentially the ex-soldier group has tremendous voting power. If it wants a cash bonus hard enough, virtually nothing can prevent it from succeeding. Just now, however, the absorbing fact is the alliance between veterans who need money and outsiders who clamor for inflation. The argument for a huge government loan to restore the elasticity of credit and the confidence of the nation is bolstered up by a

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good case, however weighty the evidence on the other side may be. Why not argue, therefore, that the easiest and best way to get such a loan is to liquidate the pledges already made to ex-soldiers? Our answer is dictated by no bias. We have our percentage of veterans, and we need money. But there is no sound parallel whatsoever between a public loan applicable to labor and permanent civic improvements and the distribution of cash among a special group of citizens. These last may need help desperately. But if so, they should use their influence to secure general, sound, effective assistance for the unemployed. The economic status of the veterans is certainly no different from—is possibly a little better than—the economic status of the population as a whole. At this hour there is no room for special favors. There is no room for dangerous precedents. And most assuredly there is every reason for deciding to spend what money is available both wisely and fairly.

THE PROGRESS along the anti-prohibition front appears to be steady. There are almost daily announcements of real developments. The engagement between the opposing forces seems to have emerged from a static phase characterized by an artillery duel of big words and the shrapnel of statistics, which made a great deal of noise but accomplished practically nothing. The forces are now out in the open and on the move. The weary populace that has been tried to the limit of its endurance by the strife, by the pitting of brother against brother, the bitterest aspect of civil war; and by the guerilla looting engaged in by the criminal element, taking advantage of the disorder and the breakdown in concerted action by the average citizenry—at last this great, inchoate and relatively voiceless populace is going to be taken into consideration by the generals of the opposing sides. It is of course only a matter of fairness to state that the anti-prohibition leaders have long been urging this. The prohibition forces, being in posession of the terrain, by reason of their concentrated attacks on state legislatures which had been given no specific mandate by their constituencies on the subject of prohibition, and by taking advantage of the absence in the service of their country in a real war of a substantial number of those who would naturally have been opposed to them, had been content to dig in and to insist on a cessation of hostilities only on the basis of the recognition of the *status quo*.

The People versus Prohibition

NOW, HOWEVER, they are beginning to think of the folks back home and how they feel about all this fighting. The *Literary Digest* poll on prohibition showing a clear majority of three to one for repeal, undoubtedly has had a far greater determining influence on this than it is given credit for. In other words, the politicians are very willing to have the wishes of their supporters clearly indicated to them; but if thereupon they change their own stated opinions, they like to do it gracefully, as though inspired by the inner voice of conviction, rather than admit that their change was forced. Every one of the challenges that the poll was unfair or inaccurate—a sort of sapping, rear-guard action maintained by the prohibition leaders—was met by the *Literary Digest* with an earnest and satisfying proof. The contention that women were not receiving a due number of ballots, or if receiving them, were not making returns, was met by a definite check by means of ballots on which the sex of the voters could be determined, and the contention was shown to be groundless. Other checks of the *Literary Digest* poll by local test votes conducted by various newspapers in various parts of the country, further demonstrated that it was a true expression of the conviction of the country. An important factor in this situation is that a ballot of three to one is enough to control the politicians, who are elected by a simple majority; but it takes a four to one vote (actually it takes even more than that because of the distribution of the vote by states) to repeal an amendment to the constitution. Whatever the final result, we believe a patriotic service has been rendered by the *Literary Digest* in making known the sentiment of the unknown man—the average citizen—when he seemed to be forgotten while the air was filled with violent and futile cannonading.

COMMENT on Irish affairs is proverbially difficult, because the sons of Erin take their politics seriously. This is not deplorable: it is, in fact, one way in which the basic sterling honesty of the race finds expression. Once in a while, however, a commentator on affairs gives the impression of being as nearly objective as human beings can become. Such a one is, we believe, Denis Gwynn, whose article on the aftermath of the elections in the April *Nineteenth Century* is at all events the most informative we have unearthed. He maintains that the chief source of opposition to the Cosgrave government lay in dissatisfaction with the financial policies of the government. First of all comes the natural restiveness which enters dissenting souls when the same group, in power for ten years, continues to dispense all "favors" and jobs. Second and more important is the whole conception of fiscal administration sponsored by the now deposed Finance Minister, Mr. Blythe, who opposed raising the income tax on the ground that wealthy persons must be lured to Erin, and who positively refused to cut government salaries below the dominion level. Mr. Gwynn thinks that the De Valera government will seek to dismantle the army and, possibly, to abolish the Senate. He feels, however, that any radical effort to alter the dominion status will be out of the question at a time when unemployment is increasing, not merely because of poor business conditions but also because Ireland, instead of exporting men to other countries, is actually getting them in owing to the failure of recent

On Irish Affairs

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emigrants to find employment abroad. Expressing an opinion on Mr. De Valera's personal attitude, Mr. Gwynn says that though "it will surprise all those who have watched his career if he changes . . . experience in office has always produced unexpected changes in politicians."

American Architecture

THE REPORT of the American Institute of Architects on social trends in their particular field, may briefly be itemized as follows: The personal suburban dwelling is passing, giving place to the "model village" of standardized houses; business buildings have assumed first importance in American architecture, both as regards the creative interest in them and the appreciative interest of the community in which they stand; government architecture is "aesthetically unimportant"; college architecture tends toward "archaic theatricality"; while churches, libraries and other cultural foundations, it is said, will rank at the end of another century as "the outstanding architectural examples of the present day." Here in short we have before us a most interesting picture of contemporary civilization in one of its more enduring and tangible aspects. We are given an opportunity to survey it almost as we would survey in the findings of archaeology the mode of life of a people remote from us, and to appraise it objectively. The towering of the steeples of the shrines of business is already a familiar phenomenon and its implications are obvious. Of course the commentator a century hence who judged by the architecture alone—if it is still standing—of our temple-like banks and cathedrals of commerce, would have no intimation of the present rigors of the system they symbolize. However, this is all merely something to think upon as offering fairly diverting avenues for mental exercise; volumes could be written on it, or hours spent in discursive conversation, and the results though no doubt stimulating to cultural awareness, would not be especially important.

THE EPITHETS which the American Institute of Architects finds for government and college building, seem to us amusingly accurate. We are proud of the fact that competent authorities hold such a high opinion of our churches and cultural foundations. No doubt these will survive, adorned with venerable ivy, when the Elite Haberdashery and the Mammoth Movie will have crumbled into calcium dust slightly stained with iron rust. It is comforting to observe that in the midst of the hurlyburly of the transient moment, our higher and enduring aspirations are given a worthy and a substantial form. Of course, we regret that the church seems to be relatively lost in the shuffle; but certainly we cannot deny that considering the total contemporary scene, this is no more than a statement of the facts. With regard to the changing trend in dwellings, the institute says in a phrase that it is "largely due to an increase in mobility." In a word, we take it, they mean the automobile. Where before people stayed home and pottered around the place, now they leave that sort of thing to the community planning and planting, and go for a ride in the car. On the ride they may see a house they like better than the one they are in, and move: just like that. Of this trend the institute speaks with a little wistful hope and some regret, a note of nostalgia for what the human race has hitherto dignified by the name of home, on which we might fittingly end: "There will probably result an increase in economy, possibly an increase in beauty, but also a decrease in aesthetic responsiveness. For it is only the selective interest of the individual that makes for critical appreciation."

A PLEA FOR CONVALESCENCE

THE BRITISH have their faults, but playing ostrich is not among them. Of course there were excellent reasons why they should have taken the first year of the current economic paralysis less nonchalantly than did Americans, whom a decade of pep-talks had led to believe that climate does not change either in California or in business. By comparison the situation in England was already marred by a seemingly chronic rash of doles, export trade losses and unrest. Nevertheless, the intelligence and keenness which many Britishers brought to the study of world affairs after 1918 were products of a tradition and a training no other country could rival. They made some errors but relatively no blunders, and they very quickly discerned the proper boundaries of stand-offishness. It is to them, therefore, that many people are looking for ideas and leadership which will help us all to keep tolerably above water for another spell.

A very interesting sample of these ideas is afforded by Sir Arthur Salter's "Recovery: The Second Effort," recently published by the Century Company and already acclaimed so widely that comment here will not be out of place. We wish, to be sure, not so much to review the book as to state an opinion of one or the other issue raised. Sir Arthur is a practised British official, whose record as a diplomat, an organizer and an economist is pretty well known. He has, as Mr. Walter Millis remarks in the New York *Herald Tribune,* "observed the world from that peculiar psychological eminence attainable only by the best type of British civil servant." Now it is characteristic of such a man to put into his title the very thing about our present situation which particularly strikes an Englishman. The effort to be made now and in the immediate future is a "second effort"—that is, a new fund of courage, good-will and common sense must be amassed in order to complete the recovery of world society from the disorders bequeathed by the war era.

Of course these disorders are not all the fault of the war. Sir Arthur makes the point that possibly the

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conflict "reduced the world's resistance to older weaknesses and hastened their fatal consequences." These weaknesses were not the result of scarcity: the present crisis is indeed an affair of starving in the midst of plenty. They were inherent rather in the "framework within which man could pursue his normal life of making, selling, consuming." The established economic system had assumed the existence of automatically responsive machinery of trade and credit, which needed only a modicum of control in behalf of the community to render it serviceable to an ever-increasing number of citizens. But we have now seen that the evidence to justify such an assumption is too meager.

At the close of the war this scepticism was not prevalent. Appalled though men were at the harm done and the dangers impending, the leaders set to work rebuilding the "framework" as skilfully as circumstances would permit. They were handicapped by political, social and racial prejudices, but they succeeded so well in reviving the traditional order of things that even Europe took on an air of general prosperity. It will suffice to enumerate a few of the achievements: the reconstruction of Austria by a vote of credit by the League of Nations; restoration of the gold standard; increased production of goods; the loans extended to Germany after the signing of the Dawes Plan; the Locarno Pact and the Kellogg Treaties. So truly remarkable were these things that men began to think optimistically of the future and—this test is always interesting—to ignore Russia.

Then came the crash, which started out to be a regulation business depression and then became a relatively new thing during the summer of 1931. This change for the worse was signalized by the collapse of the Austrian Credit-Anstalt, but one thinks too much attention has been paid to this event. What really mattered was that, this time, the work of reconstructing Austria was undertaken by a divided League of Nations. British opposition to current French aspirations sent London money to the rescue of the Danube republic. Shortly thereafter England herself was shown to be in a perilously weak condition. Thereupon France supplied the funds, and with these was able to forestall completely the move which the Germans had made to effect a Customs' Union with Vienna. This in turn revealed to the last distressing detail the mortal financial weakness of Germany. In a word: the collapse of the Credit-Anstalt was the point at which the problems Europe had not solved were brought face to face with the unsatisfactory solutions proposed.

Sir Arthur offers a lucid account of these problems, and all he writes is eminently worth reading with care. His point is, however, that the world must now make a second effort to reconstruct the post-war era. While reckoning fully with the truth that marshalling courage, brains and enthusiasm a second time is fearfully difficult, he is nevertheless an optimist. This he remains even after he has conceded the novelty of the task confronting men. They must seek to control what has hitherto been supposed to be automatic machinery—must, above all, manipulate the medium of exchange, so as to get (a) more money and (b) a reasonably stable price-level. They must also seek to perpetuate the desire for peace and the existing safeguards against war. We do not know whether Sir Arthur's recommendations on this subject are any more practical than other people's; but what really matters is that public opinion, educated to grasp the significance of this problem, insist that it be solved with tenacity by the men selected for the purpose.

But at least two barriers to improvement are now so evidently baneful that the public ought surely to be aware of at least them. The first is the tendency to subordinate the world's economic welfare to the aims of nationalistic politics. When the Versailles Treaty was signed, victor nations were understandably enough hardly in a mood to forego spoils which in other times were the natural rewards of military success. In 1932, however, the effect of such a treaty is this: Europe, which needs coöperation, is being ripped apart by attitudes which still virtually assume the existence of war. The effort to treat Germany as if she were an armed fortress—by keeping her in economic subjection and by refusing to alter territorial changes imposed for strategic reasons—must soon have the effect of actually provoking Germany to fight. This fight may not, in all human probability will not, resemble a clash between armies. The Germans will seek a way out in precisely the same place where Russia is looking for one. They very likely will not turn Communistic; but they will manage their trade and money as if they were Communistic. France may then attempt to impose its will by force, but the people of Gaul are not the Old Guard nor is M. Tardieu a Napoleon. It is Signor Mussolini who has seen the point and who, in a recent message, has boldly championed a revision of the treaty.

The second barrier is the almost universal unwillingness of Americans to face facts. Of course a great deal is being said and written which is vastly more uproarious and even revolutionary than were the speeches and books of yesteryear. But emotions are not yet truths. There is even a genuine danger lest, in the excitement of comparing our present state to a "war-time emergency," the nation be rushed off its feet by ill-considered propaganda for this and that. When we say that facts are not being faced, we mean: there is no clear realization that a way out of the mess of individualism lies through a new form of corporate action. The plain truth is that, unlike the English, the United States has not made even its "first effort." Aloof from the rest of the world, aloof even in the sense that the citizen shied from the community, we have yet to understand that ours is and has been a fool's paradise. If Sir Arthur's book can help to make this a little clearer than it has been, we shall wish for it the greatest possible success.

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HOW TO GET ECONOMIC PLANNING

By ERNEST F. DUBRUL

The writer of the following paper is interested in the possibilities for industrial planning. Asserting that the financial power of the 150,000 financial corporations existing in the United States have placed the control of their wealth in "less than 100 of them," Mr. DuBrul finds it "reasonable to think that the social duty of solving these problems—employment and industrial planning—rests primarily on the shoulders of the men who are in control of the 300 largest corporations, both financial and non-financial." The importance and feasibility of this duty are then analyzed and stated pointedly.—The Editors.

IN THESE days of dull business and widespread misery due to unemployment, it seems worth while to point out the significance of intense concentration of power and authority in the management of a very few corporations. It is not enough to look at total figures of all sorts and generalize about excessive speculation, overexpansion, overstocking, or overbooming, which brought on a depression. It does no good to indict business men in the mass, as though all are equally responsible for bad conditions. It will be more useful to examine into which classes of business men had the most power to create the conditions. Some significant facts indicate that the main responsibility for unemployment and the need for long-term planning of business rest squarely with the managements of about 300 large companies.

We may start with the fact that business is mostly conducted by corporations. In 1927 there were about 450,000 corporations filing United States revenue returns. As these corporations are of great variety, both in size and in the nature of their operations, they exercise widely varying influences on business conditions. Some are large employers, most of them are very small employers, of labor. In some large corporations the employment problem is very different from that of other large ones.

The financial corporations such as banks, insurance companies, holding companies, etc., number about 150,000. Approximately 303,000 corporations of the non-financial type operate in production, transportation, utilities and merchandising.

The financial corporations do not create much direct unemployment among their own forces. But they do exert great influence on the management policies of utilities, transportation, producing and distributing corporations. The influence of these financial corporations increases in some geometric ratio with their size. Any large New York City bank has far more influence on business managers than a large number of small banks whose joint resources might be equally as great. The large financial institutions fit tightly into the unemployment picture, because the business cycle is primarily due to financial or credit causes. Studies by such men as Wesley Mitchell, Carl Snyder, Bradford Smith, Lionel Edie, Arnold Dana and others, all go to show that when credit is overexpanded by the financial interests, a business boom is generated which, when it goes too far, as it always does, is followed by depression and unemployment.

The financial power of the United States is concentrated into a very few of the 150,000 financial corporations. The writer is not aware of any studies of this concentration, but would feel safe in saying that less than 100 of them control more than 50 percent of the total wealth of such financial corporations. At the head of the system, of course, stand the Federal Reserve banks.

These few managements have voluntarily assumed the arduous responsibility of managing most of the credit of the country. In all booms they exercise a large influence in overexpanding credit precisely at a time when credit should be contracted. But even if all the big institutions had been doing the right thing and all the little ones had been wrong, all the little ones put together could not possibly have outweighed the influence of a few big ones. Therefore, as credit management plays so great a part in generating booms, these few men must do their share in seeking solutions to the problems which they themselves have been so potent in creating.

A study of the importance of large non-financial corporations by Gardiner C. Means of Columbia University was published in the *American Economic Review* for March, 1931. This study shows that 200 of the non-financial corporations can be fairly estimated to own at least 50 percent of all the present non-financial corporate wealth. These 200 comprise all of such corporations owning over $80,000,000 of assets. Another group of 800 corporations owning between $18,000,000 and $80,000,000 of assets, own about 18 percent of the assets of non-financial corporations. Some of these are controlled by some of the 200 largest corporations. Therefore less than 1,000 corporations control over two-thirds of the wealth, power and income of the non-financial group of corporations.

Allowing for the interlocking of directorates, for inactivity of many directors, and for influence on smaller corporations which sell to or buy from these large corporations, their influence on business extends even more widely than their proportion of assets. So it might easily be that less than 2,000 influential men, directly or indirectly, control the policies of these 1,000 corporations. Control of policy means, of course, control of employment and control of long-time business planning if, as, and when there is such planning.

These facts make it seem reasonable to think that the social duty of solving these problems rests primarily on the shoulders of the men who are in active control

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of the 300 largest corporations, both financial and non-financial. The very concentration of control which these men have themselves worked out imposes this social duty on them.

A large part of the job of solving the problems of employment and business planning may be narrowed down to the smaller group of managements engaged in manufacturing consumer goods. The operations and policies of the consumer goods industries set the pace directly for the dependent producer goods industries, as well as for the transportation industries, which haul both the consumer and producer goods. Of the 97 industrial corporations listed by Professor Means among those with over $80,000,000 of assets, 67 manufacture primarily consumer goods. These huge corporations naturally exercise a tremendous influence on the operations of their suppliers.

The large manufacturers of producer goods can do little long-term planning of operations if the consumer goods industries are irregular. It follows that the managers of the large producer goods industries should therefore insist that their large customers do their manifest duty in working out the problems of stabilization in those consumer goods industries.

The group of managements engaged in distribution do not have as much of an employment problem as the manufacturers do. The distributor group would not be so prone to overbuy and overstock if the large manufacturers had worked out a stabilization program. The manufacturers can influence the large distributors to stabilize their purchases, especially as inventory control is easier for the distributor than for the manufacturer.

Employment in operating railroads and utilities depends primarily on manufacturing activities, which produce goods to be moved. If manufacturing were more stabilized, the railroads and utilities would have more stable income and could therefore plan their own operations and construction much better than they have been able to do. But they have a duty in helping to work out stabilization of their own operations.

The equipment and construction industries experience short, sharp booms and long, deep depressions because of the buying habits of their large customers. Overexpansion of production facilities accounts for the major part of the peak of a boom. Fluctuations in the construction and equipment industries can be minimized only if the large manufacturing, railroad and utility units learn to stabilize their own policies of constructions and replacement. So they must join in the movement to impress their customers with the need for stability.

Public sentiment must be focused on these few managements if anything is to be accomplished. Leaders of industry and finance have heretofore been able to offer lame excuses for their mistakes. But the very size of their corporations imposes the duty on them of not making so many mistakes as they have been making.

The social cost per mistake made per executive runs to enormously great values in the case of large corporations. As the 200 largest non-financial corporations are growing about three times as fast as the other 303,000 put together, there is sure to be an increased cost of such mistakes in the future. This is a risk which these managements have imposed on the body politic, so it seems to be their manifest duty to minimize it to the greatest possible extent. Neglect of this duty in the past has brought us to where we are, and has created a demand that cannot long be denied, that the managements of these large corporations give an account of their stewardship.

It is leading to serious questioning on the part of thoughtful citizens, as to whether society can afford this concentration with all its evils, in exchange for a supposed efficiency that gives us low-cost goods. Even big business is finding out that low-cost goods must have consumers, and that to be consumers men must have purchasing power, which for the masses must come from wages, which in turn depend on having a job. If, therefore, mistakes of executives of large corporations throw too many people out of jobs at one time, the very size of the corporation defeats any economy of production supposed to be gained by concentrating power to make mistakes in too few men.

Consider the relative effects of a mistake of overexpansion, overstocking or whatever it may be, when made by the head of a large unit compared to the same mistake by the head of a small unit.

An ordinary month's production of a large motor company will be about 200,000 cars and trucks which would have an estimated wholesale value of between $80,000,000 and $100,000,000. It is comparatively easy in the automobile business to make a mistake which would result in a shut-down of one month's duration. This would mean unemployment for a month for over 100,000 directly employed men in Detroit, and nobody knows how many men working elsewhere, probably at least 100,000 more. Now if it were made socially impossible for any one management to control that amount of business, if any automobile company were not allowed to make over 25,000 vehicles per month, the power to make mistakes would be limited to that figure. Thus the power of the present one large individual factor would be divided among eight men, instead of being lodged in one man.

Now let us consider the chances of mistakes per thousand employees. It is not likely that eight men would all make the same mistake at the same time. For an equivalent total volume of business, the more the dispersion, the less are the chances of mistakes per unit of volume and the less the cost per mistake made. We can well believe that the total cost of mistakes may also be less. All the social costs to the country of all the mistakes made by eight managers dividing $200,000,000 of production, could not equal the cost of one large mistake made by the management controlling that same amount of production.

In view of the tremendous social costs involved, it seems quite reasonable to question whether our nation

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can afford to allow the concentration of control to be as great as it has already become. Mr. Means's study indicates that if concentration continues at the recent rate, 200 large non-financial corporations will own 80 percent of the wealth of such corporations in another twenty years. One need not be at all radical to be disturbed over the possibilities of such a condition producing disaster for these corporations as well as for the country.

The present distress of millions of human beings offers very fertile soil for the propagation of radical ideas. This fact alone makes it obligatory for managements of the large corporations, who employ the majority of wage earners, to prevent unemployment in their own plants. Mr. Swope and Mr. Young of General Electric have been emphatic on this point, but not enough other executives of large corporations are impressed with this obligation. The general tendency is to pass up the question as being beyond human control, in spite of the fact that business is entirely a human activity. The common alibi is that no one can do anything.

When a large corporation follows any policy, the effects are more intense than if a multitude of small concerns do the very same thing. Because of the relative importance of the large companies, their policies must surely account for the greater part of our unemployment problem. So unless the large corporations do interest themselves in these problems, there can be no solution by business itself. If the executives of big business do not take hold of the problem seriously, they and their stockholders cannot complain if it is taken out of their hands by *force majeure* expressed in politics.

The problem of leadership in business planning seems to narrow down to a very few manufacturers and a very few financial men. They must take the lead in making conscious changes away from a policy which focused attention on the magnitude of present profits rather than on stability and security of future profits. This neglect of consideration of the future, if continued, may well lead to the sacrifice of their present magnitude, as well as all future magnitude and security, if subversive political action is generated as a result of a continuance of these past policies.

The tremendous social cost per mistake made puts an immediate and pressing responsibility on the management of large corporations to avoid as many mistakes as possible, even the mistake of becoming too powerful for the social good, by using every practical means possible of getting facts for executive guidance and then of using the facts. Often executives of large corporations have made serious mistakes because they failed to use facts that were available, and were used to advantage by executives of small corporations.

Here are some practical steps which the large corporations can take at once to solve these very important problems whose solution depends primarily on them.

First, each of these 300 largest corporations could well set up a business research staff of its own, headed by a man thoroughly competent, not only as a research director, but as a management advisor as well. Only a handful of these companies now have such staffs. They find that the cost of such a staff is negligible compared to the cost of mistakes that formerly were made before such staffs were established. With the findings of such a staff to guide them, executives of these few large corporations now make fewer mistakes.

Second, the 300 largest corporations could well finance a central, but intensely practical, research staff to study these problems. This staff should not be under the control of the contributors. It should be of a kind to command the confidence of the country. It should contain men with both managerial and research experience to produce findings of immediate and concrete benefit. A staff of cloistered academicians would be utterly futile. It is not likely that these 300 corporations would need to contribute as much as $5,000 each per year to support the best central staff that industry needs. Five thousand dollars per year would be a very small premium indeed to pay for the ultimate security which these corporations need so much. By establishing such a research staff these large corporations would at least show the public a willingness to seek for practical, sound solutions to the problem of stabilization. The central fact-finding staff could be the clearing-house and critic for the research staffs of the particular corporations, thereby making the internal staffs that much more efficient.

Third, the managers of these corporations would have to learn to coöperate in actions conforming to the findings of the research staffs. The heads of these corporations would have to lead others in their respective industries to coöperate as well.

Fourth, at this point the trade associations fit into the picture. They too should have good staffs, coöperating with both the staffs just mentioned, carrying the findings down to the small units, and promoting the use of the facts so found. By coöperation between trade associations coördination of operations could be produced between whole industries, all based on sane, coordinated plans, which in turn would be based on facts and not on the hunches of ill-informed, scattered executives. The trade associations can and should be bigger factors than they are now in our business structure. But the right kind of associations would cost more than most associations now get from these industries in financial support. The association managers should be as good business men as the large units themselves would use to head up their own staffs. But business will not get the right kind of associations until the executives of the large units are found to take a keener interest in trade association activities than most of them do now. The large units would also have to be willing to bear their fair share of association expenses, a share proportional to their own participation in a given industry. Many large units refuse to do this now, because they have not yet learned what real coöperation can do even for their own corporations, to say nothing of results

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for their industry, for business as a whole, and for society in general.

The program of action outlined above is not new, not untried. It is merely an expansion—through the coöperation of managers of a few large concerns—of what has already been done in a few outstanding cases. Its success in those few cases nullifies any criticism of its being visionary or impractical. Quite the contrary, those executives in high places who still believe it better to work on hunches and inspiration than on facts, are themselves the impractical visionaries whose policies have brought business to its present deplorable state. So it seems to be the job of realistic executives, who know the value of facts, to convince such visionaries in high places that a sound program of fact-finding and fact-using is the most pressing need of business today, if business is to avoid ill-advised legislative attempts to correct evils which business men themselves have created because of their ignorance of easily obtainable facts.

CATHOLIC LEAKAGE

By JOHN A. O'BRIEN

A SYMPOSIUM on Catholic leakage, in the December issue of the *Ecclesiastical Review,* has been the subject of repeated comment by Dr. Gerald Shaughnessy, S.M., in THE COMMONWEAL and in the *Review.* As a participant in that symposium, may I submit for the readers of THE COMMONWEAL a few observations on the discussion of that topic in both these journals?

In the first place, Dr. Shaughnessy expresses indignation that I gave prominence to Dr. Ross's original contention in THE COMMONWEAL concerning alleged large losses, by presenting his conclusion along with its statistical groundwork in the *Review.* Let us look now at the circumstances occasioning the symposium.

In April, 1931, a story sent out by the Associated Press and appearing in almost every public newspaper in the country, stated that according to figures released by "The Official Catholic Directory," the Catholic population of the United States for the year ending December 31, 1930, was 20,091,593. This, the news story stated, represented a gain of but 13,391 over the preceding year in spite of the addition of 39,528 converts. A few days later the same story, only in greater detail, was sent out by the N.C.W.C. News Service at Washington, D. C., and was carried by practically every Catholic newspaper in the United States.

Thus into the home of every American citizen, and into the homes of many millions of Catholics, not once but twice, there was carried the amazing story that the Catholic population of over 20,000,000, in spite of an addition of 39,528 converts, had experienced a total gain of the measly sum of 13,391! What had become of the enormous natural increase of over 20,000,000 people? Could it be possible that the number of defections during 1930 more than offset the increase resulting from the excess of births over deaths in a population of over 20,000,000, thus causing a decline in the number of born Catholics? That the number of defections in one year could be so great, seeemed incredible.

I was but one of the millions of readers who were perplexed by this amazing story. The news despatch carrying the story into every home in America, cited as authority "The Official Catholic Directory"—a not unimpressive title. The Catholic newspapers of the country publishing the same story in more elaborate detail, had apparently judged the figures to be at least approximations to the truth, or they would scarcely have published the item even though it was sent them by our national Catholic news-gathering agency.

My perplexity was increased when THE COMMONWEAL of June 10, 1931, carried an article, "The Catholic Birth Rate," by Dr. J. Elliot Ross. In this the author purported to show on the basis of the birth and death statistics in the "Directory" that the Church had sustained a loss of about 500,000 born Catholics in 1930. There were a few comments published in the Communications column of THE COMMONWEAL, but I did not clearly see that the statistical groundwork of his article was demolished. Could anything then be more natural, more reasonable, or more calculated to arrive at the true facts, and to promote Catholic interests as well, than to submit the question for discussion in the *Review,* a magazine devoted to the interests of our priests, where it would receive from competent sources the scrutiny and investigation it deserved?

Accordingly I summarized the evidence prepared by Dr. Ross, adding a few tables from Mohlman, and the pertinent observations of Bishop England and others pointing in the same direction. In addition, I secured from Dr. Ross a more detailed statement of his statistical method than had appeared in THE COMMONWEAL, and ran it in a footnote so that it could be scrutinized most carefully by competent critics. True, I was impressed by the evidence and stated that I could see no escape from the conclusion flowing from the statistical computations presented, but I publicly invited refutation, not by mere assertions of the inaccuracy of the figures but by the presentation of factual evidence. With his customary circumspection, the editor of the *Review* submitted the article for searching scrutiny and criticism by an expert statistician. His criticism, along with the comment of Dr. Ross on such criticism, was to be published after my article as part of the symposium—an arrangement in which I heartily concurred.

Could any procedure, I repeat, be more natural, or fairer, or more reasonable, or more conducive to the

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ascertainment of the true facts and thus calculated to promote Catholic interests as well, than to bring up the question for full and open discussion in the pages of a magazine for Catholic priests, from whom it would be sure to receive the attention and scrutiny it deserved? What is there in such a procedure which offers the slightest foundation for Dr. Shaughnessy's action in hurling such charges as calumny and *lèse-majesté* at the participants in that discussion?

The symposium brought forth an excellent contribution from Father Peter J. Bernarding of Pittsburgh in the February issue of the *Review*. On the basis of his study of the statistics of the "Directory" over a period of ten years, Father Bernarding points out the numerous repetitions and the freakish irregularities which come to light when the returns are examined year after year. He puts the case in a nutshell when he reaches the following conclusion concerning the reliability of the "Directory" figures, a conclusion with which most readers will probably now heartily agree:

> That they are faulty, most priests realize; just how faulty they are, probably very few know. It is only by tables of the returns extending over a number of years, such as the writer has kept for the past decade, that this comes to light. These tables show that out of 108 dioceses and vicariates recorded in the "Directory," only thirty-eight, or about one-third, have never sent in the same population figures two years in succession. All the rest have duplicated figures repeatedly, most of them as often as five or six times, and in this some of the large dioceses are the worst offenders.

I commend Father Bernarding's article to all the readers of THE COMMONWEAL who wish to read a criticism of alleged Catholic leakage written in a calm, judicious and objective manner. He makes all of us who have not had the hobby of comparing "Directory" statistics year by year, his debtors. It was this type of contribution the symposium was designed to elicit.

That the purpose of the discussion has been amply achieved, must be evident to all the readers of both magazines. Thanks to the studies of Fathers Bernarding and Shaughnessy, even the birth and death statistics of the "Directory" are shown to be so "unbelievably untrustworthy" as to be not only utterly meaningless but positively deceptive. Before crediting any figure in the future, it is apparent that one will have to look up directories for the past ten years to see if the present figure is a mere repetition. Is it too much to hope that as a result of the discussion steps will be taken by the proper authorities to secure at least approximately reliable figures for the "Directory" in the future? As Bishop Noll points out, we cannot determine at the present time even the simple fact as to whether the Catholic population is increasing or declining.

In focusing attention upon this discussion and in thus helping to bring to a larger audience the true facts concerning the "unbelievable untrustworthiness" of the "Directory" statistics, I see no reason for the editor of THE COMMONWEAL striking his breast with a *mea culpa*, but only cause for congratulation at a task well done. Such, too, was the end Dr. Ross had in view, as he clearly stated in the January issue of the *Review*. If Dr. Shaughnessy had paused to reflect, he surely would have realized that one wishing to hurl a calumny against the Church does not go to a Catholic magazine any more than one with an urge to hurl a brickbat goes into a police station to exhibit his technique.

If Dr. Shaughnessy had followed the procedure of Father Bernarding and had submitted his data, he would have accomplished his purpose admirably. For his criticism of the "Directory" statistics was excellent. But no! He is determined to attack the intentions and the good faith of those who raised the question—for the title of the symposium ended with a question mark—and charges them among other things with calumny and treason.

1. With characteristic mildness Dr. Shaughnessy characterizes my presentation of the statistical groundwork published by Dr. Ross in THE COMMONWEAL as a "slavish copying," and because I presented one of his computations twice, convicts me of "absurd logic" which is beyond absolution. But if Dr. Shaughnessy had read my article calmly, he would have perceived that an express acknowledgement of Dr. Ross's study as the source of the data presented coupled with a reference by name to Dr. Ross *not less than six times*, gave ample evidence that I made no pretense at originality and was content to play the humble rôle of a reporter. In stating the above, I do not wish to shift any onus—for to my mind there is none—to Dr. Ross. For carrying the discussion in the form of a symposium to the *Review*, where it received due attention and scrutiny, I gladly assume full responsibility.

2. My invitation for the refutation of the statistical groundwork by the presentation of "factual evidence," Dr. Shaughnessy finds enormously funny. He grows facetious and showers me in turn with sarcasm and ridicule. Leaving the rôle of a statistician, he essays the rôle of a prophet. Within the short space of two consecutive sentences in THE COMMONWEAL, he undertakes to tell an astonished world *what* I "would object to," *what* I "would say," and *what* I "might say." Could anything be more revealing as to the itch that steals Dr. Shaughnessy from the desert of statistics to the playground of my mind?

3. Dr. Shaughnessy pictures me in THE COMMONWEAL as excluding the Church in America from the promise of Our Saviour: "Behold! I am with you all days." One would think that as a statistician, Dr. Shaughnessy would be the last man in the world to seek to gloss over defections by an appeal to scriptural quotations. He must know that Christ's promise does not absolve us from the stern duty of working by might and main to spread the kingdom of God, to search with eager and open eyes for leakage everywhere, and to try to stem such defections with every atom of resourcefulness at our command. By no such facile formula as the quotation of scriptural texts can we stem the rav-

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ages which indifferentism, agnosticism and the concupiscence of the flesh are making upon the mystical body of Christ, not only in America but in every country in the world.

This is true not only in our age but in every century since Christ established His Church as the saving bark for humanity in a sin-tossed sea. Where losses occur, we do not complain that Our Blessed Lord is not keeping His promise, that He is not doing His part, but simply that we are either failing in ours, or that there are some circumstances beyond our control. "The fault, dear Brutus, lies not in the stars, but in ourselves, that we are underlings." Furthermore, in spite of our best efforts, the concupiscence of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life will probably always levy some tribute upon weak humanity.

4. In closing his article in the *Review,* Dr. Shaughnessy pictures me as charging that the Church in America is decadent, corrupt and corroded to the heart and as attacking "the good faith of bishops, priests and people." Why? Because of the view I expressed that "we have unwittingly and unwillingly contributed vast annual quotas of born Catholics to swell the ever-growing army of the churchless around us." But this is a complete *non-sequitur*. Even if the loss were as great as one out of every forty, it would not be a direct reflection upon our bishops, priests and people. The unfairness and the illogicality of such a charge can be clearly shown by a simple *reductio ad absurdum*. One out of twelve left Christ. Shall we say, therefore, that Judas's defection is a direct attack upon the character of Jesus Christ? Did I hear someone say, "Qui nimis probat, nihil probat"?

I refuse to believe that the faith of any of the readers of the *Review* or of THE COMMONWEAL is so weak that the whisper of defections will throw them into a panic, and cause them to believe that the eternal foundations are about to collapse. We may fail here and there, but we know that to the Church belong not merely the years but the centuries. She may suffer the loss not only of hundreds of thousands, but of millions of her children in Russia, torn from her bosom by violence. She can witness the exile of her devoted defenders, the Jesuits, from Spain, and the confiscation of her property. She can view the frightful limitation of her clergy in Mexico and the resultant injury to religion. But through it all she remains undismayed, because she knows that in the future as in the past, she will emerge from every persecution triumphant and victorious, leading the captor captive. The Pentecostal fire is still upon her brow and in her heart there is the spirit of eternal youth.

This unfaltering faith in the divine character and ultimate invincibility of our holy religion does not imply, however, that we must feed soothing syrup to everyone until they all chirp serenely: "God's in His heaven, all's right with the world!" Yes, God's in His heaven, but all is not right with our world. The leprosy of indifferentism, the cancer of agnosticism, and the gnawings of the flesh are making now, as always, their ceaseless ravages on the spouse of Christ. No matter how often Dr. Shaughnessy or anyone else will attempt to soothe us with the assurance that the immigrant has kept the Faith, unless we are deaf, dumb and blind we cannot hide from our senses the hideous evidence that many immigrants of every nationality in the world, and many of their sons and daughters as well, have not kept the Faith. With O'Briens, O'Haras and Shaughnessys, to say nothing of Murphys, Kelleys, and Burkes, in Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian and Episcopalian churches in all our large cities, the evidence strikes too close to home and is too blinding and too ghastly. We refuse to cover gnawing cancers with lilies, sprinkle perfume upon them, and sing, "How lovely!"

By no stretch of magnaminity can I permit Dr. Shaughnessy to plume himself with the white robe of knightly chivalry as the self-appointed defender of the "bishops, priests and people," while he pillories me with shafts of ridicule and places upon my bowed shoulders the mantle of ignominy. I accept with gratitude Dr. Shaughnessy's disclosure of the "unbelievable untrustworthiness" of the "Directory" figures. But when he essays the rôle of the satirist and inquisitor, I fail to be impressed.

The simple fact is that the subject of leakage, like every other topic having a bearing upon the salvation of souls, is amenable to discussion, both as to its extent and its causes, without the calling of hard names, cries of treason and the suggestion of hurried trips to the guillotine. More than a hundred pages of data received from bishops, prelates, priests and devoted laymen, giving the results of their observations and experience on the extent and causes of defection, confirm this conviction. They show that it is one of the most urgent problems now demanding our frank and courageous facing. The fruits of their rich experience and observation I shall shortly bring to the attention of the priests of America.

Probably every parish in America and in the world has its quota of sheep, "lost, strayed and stolen." To ignore their departure, and to refuse to look for them with courage and persistence does not seem to me to be following in the footsteps of that Divine Shepherd Who counseled leaving the ninety-nine sheep in the mountains and searching for the lost one till it is found.

To a Cricket in a Country Church

Lacking liturgical nuances,
You do not wait to give responses.
Your *kyrie* and *antiphon,*
Amen and *gloria* are one.
Yet is your mode not faithful, mild,
Unprecedented altar-child?
And there is sweet monotony
In your unceasing litany.
I pray no beadle, large of garth
Shall come to put you from God's hearth.

MARJORIE MURPHY.

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A POLITICAL EMPIRE DISAPPEARS

By M. GRATTAN O'LEARY

IT IS a curious commentary upon international thinking that while Mr. De Valera's political victory in the Irish Free State is being interpreted as a blow at the solidarity of the British Empire, and there is much talk about oaths of allegiance to King George, a recent and far more significant event affecting the relations between Canada and Great Britain, passed almost without notice. The event was the adoption by the British Parliament of the Statute of Westminster.

Prior to the Imperial Conference of 1926, Canada had attained a position of almost complete self-government in the sphere of her internal affairs. And, curiously enough, it was in connection with her external affairs that she had completed her political development. For prior to 1926 she had complied with the two vital tests of international standing, namely: (1) power to exchange diplomatic representatives with foreign states; and (2) power to negotiate and sign treaties with foreign states. Thus, the Halibut Treaty with the United States had been negotiated by the Canadian government, and had been signed by a member of that government, without the addition of any British signature.

The conference of 1926 declared that Great Britain and the dominion were:

> Equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their internal or external affairs.

Had this been literally and legally accurate, Canada would have been a sovereign independent state. For the United Kingdom had undoubtedly that status, and Canada's position was declared to be equal to that of the United Kingdom. The declaration, however, lacked legal definition and sanction.

Yet the 1926 conference made a vast difference. Its most important achievement was to terminate the administrative association between the United Kingdom and Canada. Prior to that time, for example, the Governor-General of Canada was a British official. He was appointed by the British government. He took his instructions from the British government. He reported to the British government. And he was subject to recall at the instance of the British government. After the conference, and because of it, the Governor-General became a Canadian official. He no longer had any association with the British government. He could not communicate with any member of it officially. He was appointed by the king on the advice—the exclusive advice—of Canadian ministers. The conference declared that

> the Governor-General of a dominion is the representative of the crown, holding in all essential respects the same position in relation to the administration of public affairs in the dominion as is held by His Majesty the King in Great Britain, and that he is not the representative or agent of His Majesty's government in Great Britain or of any department.

The conferences of 1929 and 1930 went a step further. They drafted clauses which they recommended as necessary to give legal validity to the declaration of 1926, and they recommended that these clauses should form part of a statute of the British Parliament.

This statute was passed and came into operation in December last, as the Statute of Westminster, 1931. By it Canada was given power to repeal or amend all British statutes which form part of her law. And by it, also, the Parliament of the United Kingdom renounced all power to legislate for Canada, except as requested and consented to by Canada. In other words, the British Parliament abandoned and renounced all imperial power as far as Canada is concerned. The following is Section 4 of the statute:

> No act of Parliament of the United Kingdom passed after the commencement of this act shall extend, or be deemed to extend, to a dominion as part of the law of that dominion, unless it is expressly declared in that act that that dominion has requested, and consented to, the enactment thereof.

The effect of this is perfectly clear. The conference of 1926 terminated all administrative association between the United Kingdom and Canada. Now, by the Statute of Westminster, all legislative control of the British Parliament over Canada has been renounced. Only at the request and with the consent of Canada can the British Parliament pass a statute applicable to Canada.

This admits of but one interpretation. It is that now no imperial association exists between the United Kingdom and Canada. There has been substituted a condition of constitutional and international equality. Premier Bennett, in a recent declaration, correctly summed up the position when he said:

> The day of the centralized empire is past. We no longer live in a political empire. . . . With the adoption of the Statute of Westminster the old political empire disappears.

Thus the equality of status between Canada and the United Kingdom is not only an actual but a legally declared fact. In no sense whatever, neither in domestic affairs nor in external matters, is Canada a subordinate adjunct of the British Empire.

In these circumstances, and with a clear realization that the old political, centralized British Empire no longer exists, that its last vestige was wiped out by the

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Statute of Westminster, Canadians fail to get excited over news from Dublin that Mr. De Valera proposes abolition of an oath of allegiance to the king. They know that the abolition of this oath would in no sense imply the secession of the Irish Free State from the coöperative union of peoples known as the British Commonwealth of Nations. The British Empire, so-called, does not today depend upon oaths or parchment treaties of any kind for its perpetuation. It rests solely upon free and voluntary coöperation; and so long as the Free State remains willing to give this coöperation, the character of the oath taken by Irish Deputies upon entering the Dail Eireann can make no material difference. If there be those in the United States who believe that abolition of the oath would see the British army back in Ireland, they are thinking and living in the Victorian era. With the passing of the oath there might come a reduction of Irish exports to England. It would never mean the export of British troops to Ireland.

ALBERT, THE SAINT OF SCIENCE: II

By H. A. JULES-BOIS

IN MY first paper on the life and work of Saint Albert, there was offered a general survey of his career and significance. It remains to furnish some detailed consideration of the vast initiative and great achievements of the Universal Doctor in the realm of ideas and religious knowledge. His genius is amazing. He proved himself to be truly universal, practical and original. He passes from ontology, logic, psychology and morals to mysticism and engulfs himself in the embrace of God.

He was a poet in prose, like Bonaventure, whereas Saint Thomas is a poet only in verse, though a great one. A fair commentator should accord a much higher place than is usually given to the literary style of Saint Thomas in his philosophical treatises and the two "Summae." His vigorous and positive Norman-Sicilian temper, the diaphaneity of his faith, his sublime sincerity, the order which reigned not only in his mind but also in the presentation of his arguments, produced a style so appropriate, so limpid, that the reader alone is at fault if he lose the trend of thought. The Latin of Saint Thomas is the perfect instrument for dialectical disputations, syllogisms and, in fine, for convincing even the opponent. Still this Latin has the monotony of the heights as was natural with such a "mountainous" man. Albert's diction, on the other hand, is rich in contrasts, in virtuosity and, without a flowery excess, leads us from smiling valleys to vertiginous summits. The general mood of this orator and thinker was vehement and fiery, whereas that of Saint Thomas was equable and apparently passionless.

Whatever was good and true in Scholastic philosophy and in the pagan alloy, scintillated in the writings of Saint Albert. He made Aristotelianism the main instrument for the teaching of the Church. Also the first Aristotelian expurgation was his. He ordered correct translations of the "Organon," the "Ethics," the "Physics" and the "Metaphysics." He taught a sound philosophy, Aristotelian in shape, repudiating equally false illuminism and presumptuous rationalism, but showed the supremacy of the intellect, though the primary avenue of knowledge is the senses. The theories of matter and form, potency and act, and all the metaphysical principles, he divested of their abstract coldness, making them real to his disciples. As to the wearisome controversy between nominalism and realism, he pursued the *ariston metron,* the golden mean, disentangling himself from both extreme factions. The universals, as he explained them, no longer seem obsolete fancies but appear lifelike. According to his moderate realism, the prototype, abiding *ante rem* in the mind of God, can be detected *in re* through the manifold exemplars; finally *post rem* the prototype is transformed into our human concept.

The inspired theologian definitely set apart the natural domain from the supernatural, the truth we may ascertain by plain reason from the truths veiled in the mysteries that we may approximate by grace or at least believe in firmly, without any conflict with reason. He fixed the principle of the unity of the human being, by demonstrating that we have only one "form," i.e., one soul. Thus he denounced the sophistry pretending that several personalities coexist within us. Such was the erroneous assumption of some scholars in his time, such is now the phantasmagoric romance schemed by modern Freudians trifling with the dreams of the subconscious. Furthermore he trained Saint Thomas to oppose the erroneous teaching of Averrhoes and Siger de Brabant that the intellect was numerically one for the whole human race, and that consequently individual men were not immortal.

These two errors are so mischievous and subtle that they seem to bear the satanic stamp. A multiple soul is inevitably divided and cut asunder, and the result would be the decomposition and dissolution of our moral unit; whereas to admit a oneness, a sameness, of intellect for all mankind means that each of us would have no personal intellect and therefore our last breath should be the sign of thorough annihilation. These are vile attempts to violate the sacredness of our being, as it came from the hands of its Maker. Bent upon our destruction, our indefatigable enemy alone could conceive and suggest these odious fallacies, and direct this perfidious assault against the very heart of our being, seeking—with our consent!—first to crumble the redoubt of our undivided consciousness,

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and then to dismantle the citadel of our own intellect. This snare intended to ruin our happiness, inner peace and salvation is ever reappearing in new philosophies and mystagogic propaganda. Nowadays Vedantists, Cosmists, Theosophists, Anthroposophists and many other factions of the kind undertake to revivify Averrhoism under other labels and, on the pretext of extolling man, disintegrate him psychologically and decapitate him spiritually. It is difficult in a brief essay on the newly canonized Doctor fully to develop this statement but its truth is apparent to all observers. The adversary of mankind deludes oftentimes really learned and sincere scholars, unorthodox ministers, philosophers, psychologists and scientists of renown, who ally themselves with the above-mentioned sects and become exponents of untrustworthy and dangerous doctrines. These sects enjoy the ancient and high patronage of venerable India, unfortunately spoiled by anarchism and pantheism.

Certain Oriental schools consider the human being analogous to a scale of storied and superposed powers, last and highest of which is *Atman,* the real self, identical with *Brahman* or God Himself. To employ another simile, this succession of selves fits one into another like drawers of a Japanese cabinet, so keenly adjusted as to merge into one. These selves would, all of them, dissolve one day, after years, centuries or aeons; and the last surviving one, the eternal, would be a ray of the intellect of God Himself, and to the Hindu, an impersonal drop of the cosmic ocean returning to its source. Therein is a combination of transcendental materialism, immanentism and pantheism.

The Arabian Averrhoes appeared in the thirteenth century as the courier of a host of captious enchanters coming uninterruptedly since then from Africa, Persia, Hindustan, to instruct the native American and the sophisticated European in a pseudo-science that intoxicates and dissociates. He, the Mohammedan of Cordova, whose ancestors issued from the peninsular wilderness, was in mediaeval times the voice of the Orient that has never ceased vaticinating. But he met in his progress the strong common sense of the University of Paris, and Albert and Thomas—two saints! He was defeated, but not without a bitter fight. May God aid us against the new Averrhoists!

Albert's originative mind preceded and, no doubt aided by grace, surpassed the intellectual athletes born in his own country, Kant and Hegel. He was also, like Leibnitz, an extraordinary and inventive savant, a universal animater. He was moreover, a towering genius in pioneering the way for the wonders of modern science.

Concerning the physical universe, Saint Thomas preserved a judicious caution. But Saint Albert's writings and experiments add a treasure of fresh discoveries to the testament of past science. In his labors in natural sciences, Albert went far beyond Aristotle's antiquated "Synopsis" and also far beyond the confused knowledge of the thirteenth century. As a chemist, he analyzed cinnabar, correctly described the properties of sulphur, and knew how to prepare caustic potassium and nitric acid. His knowledge in acids, metals, stones and salts was extraordinary and singularly precise, in view of the widespread superstitious ignorance of his epoch. By demonstrating the sphericity of the globe he was to be an inspiration to Christopher Columbus in his voyage of discovery. In his bull, Pius XI mentions among the subjects of Saint Albert's stimulating studies: astronomy, geography, meteorology, climatology, physics, mechanics, architecture, chemistry, mineralogy, anthropology, zoölogy and botany, to which may be added the art of weaving, navigation and agriculture. He was the forerunner of Gall in phrenology, of Lavater in physiognomy, and of modern psychologists in analysis of character. His was an historical, physical, critical and experimental method. He said:

> A philosopher should admit nothing without sufficient reason, for it is a desire innate in all of us to know the causes of natural things, to study their properties, to grasp their differences.

How modern this sounds! Most precociously, before the dawn of experimentation, Albert unfolded the right methods thereof. His gift of "anticipation" is described in an extraordinary volume from the pen of Dr. Ponchet, entitled "Albert le Grand et la science experimentale." The holy leader in wisdom enumerated three different methods of study:

> Authority for theology, reason for philosophy, experimentation in natural science. . . . [In theology authority is] inspired by the Holy Ghost. [But] as to other sciences, authority is weaker since it comes from the fallible forces of the human mind. . . . It may behoove Pythagoreans to swear by the word of their master; for our part, in natural sciences we are content to receive the word when its truth has been proven by reason.

Albert had to pay dearly for his stupendous advance in knowledge in a gullible and imaginative time like his. By the credulous ignorant he was considered a magician and a thaumaturgist. Yet he opposed the erroneous affirmations of his contemporaries when he criticized the authenticity of magic and attributed it to the power of imagination. As to the alchemic fabrication of gold, he wrote that art alone could not create a new substantial form. So imbued was he with the true spirit of modern investigation long before right criticism became the fashion, that he expressed contempt for false marvels and even "discarded the portion of genuine prodigies, to turn his attention only to the normal laws." In the first book of "De coelo et mundo," he wrote:

> We are not to inquire how God in nature, according to His good pleasure, employs creatures to produce portents by which He makes His power so striking, but rather the phenomena which are of ordinary occurrence and act as natural causes.

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The preposterous writings of magicians mendaciously decorated with Albert's name, are a compilation of popular superstitions collected by a certain Heinrich von Sachsen. According to legends that are unverified, Albert, in his Cologne cabinet, constructed a kind of "Androïde" or speaking head; were this so, he would have been the forerunner of the age of machines, preceding Descartes's automaton christened by the French philosopher, "My Daughter Francine," and Vaucansons's *sublimes jouets* of the eighteenth century. Therefrom Goethe took his idea of the homunculus. Another prodigy attributed to Albert is that when the emperor visited the Dominican convent "winter was transformed into spring" with exhibitions of fresh flowers and fruits preserved by an unheard-of process. If the fact were authentic, it could be but the happy invention of a hothouse installed by him in the monastery.

Now let us turn from old wives' tales to the words of Alexander Humboldt and Professor Meyer, the botanist. These two authorities are untiring in their praise of the illustrious mediaeval Doctor. Humboldt was amazed at the finesse of Albert's observations as to the physiology of plants, the influence of mountains in determining climate, and the efficacy of different angles of sun rays in warming the earth. In his "Geschichte der Botanik" Professor Meyer is still more enthusiastic:

> All honor to him who achieved such astonishing progress in the science of nature as to find no one, I will not say to surpass, but even to equal him for the space of three centuries!

From these commentaries one can better understand the wisdom of the Pontiff when, in his bull canonizing the glorious Albert, he remarks:

> No real theologian is afraid of any damage from operations of nature or natural reason rightly investigated; for these very things bear upon them the light of the Creator Himself. . . . Between science and faith, between the true and the good, between sound learning and sanctity there is no opposition of any sort but rather the most intimate cohesion.

I am not acquainted with Albert's miracles recorded in the process of his canonization; but I surmise that not the least of them is the gradual and uninterrupted progress of his knowledge which has its beginning in a consideration of things and finds its consummation in a hymn to God.

His example comfirms the fact that faith and charity produce real miracles whereas science is but, at its best, the earthly mother of prodigies in the natural order. If well understood, sciences are great material benefactors and a spur to the mind. By the exercise of observation and experimentation, by the training of speculative and practical reason, by the incentive of hypothesis, they appear to be a preliminary or a codicil to the science of sciences, theological wisdom. In his book on Peter Lombard's "Sentences" Albert wrote:

> The certainty of science relies upon principles evident in themselves, that determine reason to decide; but the certitude of faith originates from an infused life, poured down by the Prime Truth, which convinces reason through a "certain love in the will" [*amore quodam voluntatis*] rather than by natural demonstrations.

This "certain love in the will" is a metaphysical aspect of the modern superconscious.

No wonder he advanced to such heights since Incarnate Wisdom instigated, at the same time, his scientific career and his religious vocation. He heard, though in another form, the "Veni et sequere me" of Christ. To his questioning on which way to follow, the Mother of God answered, "Sapientiae studio incumbe" ("Devote thyself to the study of wisdom"). He did. According to the theological degree he was *doctor prius vita quam doctrina,* being a model first in his life, then by his doctrine. His biographer Seghart has noted:

> He shone in the midst of general corruption, as a precious blossoming in the sands of the wilderness. Perpetually he preserved his stainless purity of conscience.

No one practised more than he, according to the counsel of Saint Dominic, the founder of his order, "the charity of doctrine, which is the first of all charities."

Returning from his controversies with Bishop Tempier, in which he conquered the detractors of *Doctor Angelicus,* he besought the Friars to read him again and in order all the treatises of his disciple; then he decreed that any endeavor to make further series of volumes in the same field was superfluous. He himself gave the example. After having declared, "The Summa of creatures leads to the Summa of the Creator," he sealed his vast encyclopaedic work with a composition entitled, "De unione cum Deo." This theological ode in prose terminates with a prayer:

> I knock, O Lord, do open to me. Open your door to an orphan, who implores You. I would be absorbed into the abyss of Your Divinity! Make me but one spirit with your Spirit, so that I can enjoy within myself Your delight. *Sicut audivimus, sic vidimus.* The Same Whom we have listened to, the Same we shall contemplate.

Afterward he waxed silent. The kind Friars who were taking care of him feared that his marvelous intellect had sunk; but no! it was still uplifted. Like him who has been compared to the angels and remains even to us his spiritual son and brother, he had in the end such a vision of the Truth that his pen fell and his lips were closed. He had entered that holy silence which he had previously called "the fatherland of the strong." Still this mystical place of rest is only the outer court of the Temple of Temples. As Pope Pius concludes:

> After so many and great labors in the vineyard of the Lord, meriting well from all, on the fifteenth day of November, 1280, Albert most calmly departed from this pilgrimage to enjoy a blessed eternity.

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HOLY HOUR

By JOSEPH CLANCY

THE STILLNESS in the great church was palpable, ponderable, tremendous. I had experienced the like before, beating, throbbing down from the San Francisco Peaks near Flagstaff, undulating from the blue and purple depths of the Grand Canyon, settling under close stars in the Great Desert. There, as here, as always, men were awed by this earnest of the *pax sempiterna.*

In the moments before the service began, the tenuous tinkle of censer chains, the gently susurrant rustle of pages turned in breviaries, rang sharp and clear; distant throat-clearing echoed; a falling kneeling-bench and a wind-blown door detonated. At the windows and wide-open entrance doors was the clatter of insects drumming in the soft air of the August night.

In subdued light the somber habits of two hundred nuns in the long nave, the black cassocks of as many priests across the wide transept, edged the vivid sanctuary as night-shadowed earth edges a whitening dawn or the darkening seas line a lingering afterglow. Beyond the sanctuary rail were rich harmonies, the contribution of centuries of pageantry: gold, green, purple, white, fragments borrowed from the Divine mosaic setting of the Mass; dark waxen gleam of oak furniture, green floor-covering, white surplices and black cassocks of priests, violet soutanes of prelates, grey-veined marble steps, a snowy white altar framed against a high dado of granite, bronzed brown and red in catastrophic primeval fires.

Above the dado the four evangelists gazed at the half dome of the ceiling where, footing pink clouds, the Great Mother, Mediatrix of all Grace, looked down pityingly on the poor banished children stealing here *requiem quaerentes.*

Tall candles mirrored in the curving wainscoting stood as acolytes halted in procession, with upward sidelong glance; lower candles, closer grouped, were like virgins swaying with lithe grace in rhythmic dance; long-stemmed heavy-headed flowers resembled pages, with slender bodies curved and heads bowed in the presence of the king. The hundred points of vacillating candle-light, reflected and multiplied on gold vases and candlelabra, simulated the splashing fall of sunlight on running waters, of golden rain. Above the tabernacle against a background of gold mosaics, dominating all, was the jeweled monstrance enthroning the Sun of Splendor, King of Glory, Creator of all beauty.

The preacher, an old man, with a faint flush on alabaster cheeks, ascended the steps of the altar. He was marked with the elements of greatness. An aura of high virtue hung gossamer-like around him. In his countenance was the glow found in the countenances of the good, embers beneath white ashes, or the iridescence from the inner fires of jewels. A prophet he seemed, standing amid the flash of brass and the glint of gold, striking Divine fire. His words strangely stirred the vast pool of thought: up from its depths, across its surface, visions swept.

Racing to link this present with some past, the mind brought up in review broad valleys stretching from the foot of high hills; trailing storm clouds breaking the outline of green mountain tops; Arizona mesas, shaped by the flow of a mighty river, gigantic immobile sentinels in overpowering desert silence, facing downstream to the rising sun; the diastole and systole of morning stars pulsing in a silken violet and rose veil above the dawn, the glory of all the dawns that I had ever seen—in all this world I do not know where greater glory is.

Some lighter, subtler touch suggested the delicate coloring of mural decorations; pastoral scenes, with sheep in tilted valleys, on steep hills, and lambs of verdurous April, giddy hilarious with the wine of new life; long shadows at evening; green and gold mosaics; cameos in creamy ivory, finely wrought; deftly chiseled traceries in silver and gold.

In the lulls of the service thought slacked, rested, ruminating. Old nuns? The sibilant whisper of their prayers? This loud insistence? Doubtless the overflowing, exuberant garrulousness of great life-long love, perhaps a prayer for warmth against the chill moving in from the tomb, for light in the gathering darkness, companionship in the loneliness that comes to all who live too long, help against the skulking threat of agnosticism, scepticism, cynicism that sometimes harries old age. The fall is often very like the spring—the same lonesome slant of the sunlight, the same sad song of birds, the impermanent surge of joy and hope, grey days and black, with all the tempestuousnes and storm of the days when spring breaks over the world.

Young priests? Black-haired, straight-shouldered, they leave the long years stretching from the fairyland of childhood to young manhood. Faces alight with glory, they walk amid the glamor and pageantry of youth: trim ships, outward bound, the white light of morning on their sails, unconscious or heedless of the smashing seas they must encounter. Mercifully they do not understand what is before them. They will not understand till the heaviness of years bows their erect bodies.

Slowly it will come to them that they are the burden-bearers of the world, asses trained to the yoke, that the Master hath need of; refuges of sinners, *cloacae maximae,* God's scavengers; consolers of the afflicted, keepers of the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; other Christs delivering men from the anger of God, from the snares of the devil, from eternal death. In touch along the way with innocence and sanctity unbelievable. Caught into the whirl of bewildering ubiquitous Unity: one God (three persons, one God), one Faith, one Christ (two natures, one person), one Sacrifice (a thousand altars, one Sacrifice; a thousand Hosts, one Christ; a hundred thousand priests, one Priest). Fused into the structure of Christ's eternal priesthood which arcs across time, bridging from eternity to eternity, trod in endless stream by the homing multitude of the just.

Old priests quiescent: imperturbable, bowed by the weight of years, stooped by the burdens of other men. Small wonder their heads are whitened by fifty, sixty, years of service of God: smaller wonder after the years of the harder task of serving men. They are placid, one must not be deceived. These old men are schooled, on them is the discipline of more than half a century; behind the naïveté, the *Unbefangenheit,* the quietude of their old eyes, in heart and memory, piled mountainous, are myriad secrets of the living and the dead; deep buried, the memory of tumultuous wars. They understand the *militia hominis super terram,* long have they heard the thundering thud of "the wrestling against flesh and blood": the tumult and confusion in the upper air, as of wild wind in the night, in the war against principalities and powers, against the spirits of wickedness in high places. They could not be where they have been for all these years and not know these things and not know men: the fearful weakness, the pride and passion, of men, the fury of the devil—over against these the terrible swift redeeming energy of God, sweeping like the roaring descent of the west wind, clearing the sky, restoring calm, bringing the peace which passeth understanding. They have seen the depths of the riches of the wisdom of God, His unsearchable ways, the multitude of His great mercies; *horribile dictu,* the calamitous lightning of His wrath.

The triumphant credo of the "Tantum Ergo" boomed out, sung with the understanding vehemence and ardor of these

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hundreds who know the meaning of the Latin word: the rolling thunders of praise in the great second strophe, "Genitori, Genitoque . . . Procedenti ab utroque compar sit laudatio." There followed the sad, hardly hidden plaint of exile and of wistfulness in the chanting of the celebrant; the solemn moment of the Sweeping Blessing, bowing all heads as the race of sunlight over billowing wheat; then the lonesome, sepulchral clanking close of the tabernacle door. At the end, the reminder of eternity, "In saecula saeculorum; in saeculum saeculi," as the clanging of a never-silent, warning bell at the shore of the infinite, never-resting sea.

Descending from the high mountain apart, the fear of the apostle stirred: peace is evanescent; this is a passing calm, the eve of a storm, preceded and followed by violence, a stretch of smooth water in the ordinarily turbulent current of life.

After the white brilliance of the church, the darkness of the summer night was Stygian; longingly, searching eyes lifted through the heavy foliage of century-old oaks to the star-strewn sky. A gesture this of camaraderie to the faithful friends who have companioned all our years, friends consanguineous with the priesthood in that amid the vicissitudes of life, guides to all *in via,* steadily they hold to changeless courses, outriding the storm of centuries, destined to ride down to and to witness final chaos, with the priesthood coterminus: for what day the priesthood shall end its earthly functioning, that day the stars shall fall.

GENIUS AND LOCAL COLOR

By JOHN A. WHITE

MUCH has been written upon the subject of local color in literature and the question must arise: is not local color, as far as it is truly valuable, the reflection of nativity through the crystal of genius? Or in other words, is not genius, no matter how cosmopolitan in effect, always the product of local influence? Those grown-up, jocund children, the ancient poets of Greece, felt the supreme power of immediate environment; they honored their playgrounds with imperishable names; they imagined the divine will embodied in delightful organisms that sang and danced and fluted in their groves and beside their streams.

All this picturesque Hellenic mythology is but a form of utterance by which an intensely lyrical civilization expressed itself; it is the fiction engendered in highly specialized and narrowly localized imagination. All the world has accepted it as the spiritual exponent of a people confined to a small area; and yet the appeal was universal, and is now universal, through its truth to the elemental, unchangeable passions and aspirations of humanity. The same may be said of succeeding phases of life and expression; the more compressed and specialized the civilization, the keener and finer its artistic stroke and the broader and freer its sympathies.

Whether it is Pindar or Emerson, Aeschylus or Shakespeare that we take up, the local flavor, the zest of the neighborhood, rises on every page. Pindar sang a universal dream of divinity, and every ode smacked of local realities. Emerson rhymed about an Over-soul in the terms of a Concord afternoon. Shakespeare and Aeschylus drew their romance out of the past or from distant sources; but England and Greece furnished the characteristic quality of genius and gave the distant value of art to the masterpieces.

What seems to have been too little understood, even by critics, is that local color may be of more importance to the genesis of the artist than it is to his creations. Wordsworth drew into himself the sweet spirit of all nature through a few hills and dales, streams and tarns, clouds and sky-spaces. He was as local as Burns or Bret Harte, and his firm footing at Rydal gave him a singular command of the world. Tennyson, too, covered but two or three English counties with his vision and was all the more true to universal life on account of his accuracy in local interpretations.

Doubtless there is a distinct tendency at present toward overdoing local color in literature. Ill-considered poetry and fiction depend for their success almost wholly upon photographic snapshots taken from out-of-the-way places and "colored by hand." Much that is ephemerally interesting is thus produced; nothing that will prove lasting. But what genius absorbs from environment is reflected, like light through a prism, and becomes a rainbow of local color imperishably fixed in art. It is not a mere transcript of some accidental phase of life interesting for the moment because of its peculiarity; it is lyrical, yet not personal, an output of humanity working through a man, and the local color is, like that of Theocritus or that of Herrick, but some private brushfuls of universal pigment cunningly laid upon a home-made canvas.

Genius may be the capacity to argue from the special to the general, to be able to reconstruct the whole from a mere fragmentary part, after the manner of the comparative anatomists. At all events the Miltons, the Burnses, the Shakespeares, the Hugos, the Scotts, have not been the universal wanderers, the literal cosmopolities. Tennyson, Milton, Dante, Wordsworth —how small the area of their actual observations, yet how like cosmogonies their works! In the microcosm they surprised the seers of the universe. This is the explanation of their steadfast hold upon the human heart; they appeal to what is ever a local sympathy and use the unmixed colors of elemental life.

We common mortals are apt to overlook what is very near to us; but the genius never does this. He has the perspective of ages behind him, and the nebulous wonders of the future before him; he is aware of them and does not underestimate them; but now his own neighborhood—the present age and his own country—gives the colors to his work. He searches for no nook save the one he was born in; the flower beside his own doorstep has the fragrance of distinction. To him local color is the last refinement of the ages; the smallest area of life is a palette spread with all the primary pigments of poetry, romance, art.

This local influence purifies or mars, makes bitter or sweet, darkens or illuminates, the character of imagination, and appears in art and literature as a tang in honey; we recognize the quality of what the bee has eaten by what the bee has made, and it is in the near vicinity of the hive that we shall find the flowers whose nectaries have afforded the distinguishing bouquet of genius.

California Poppies

Incalculable moment (dim, long-lost)
  Occurred perhaps, when a one-winged star,
Mutinous, young, and at burning cost,
  Plunged to the earth, splitting a scar
Deep and down to the bone of rock,
  Spraying the poppy seeds out on the wind
And through the valley.
                Incalculable shock
  And moment! Yet thus was thinned
A mountain garden . . . here below,
  Centuries later at half-past four,
One languid petal, timed to go,
  Has dropped from the blue glass vase to the floor.

MATHA BANNING THOMAS.

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WHICH WAY OPERA?

By GRENVILLE VERNON

THE RECENT official announcement that the Metropolitan Opera House was in grave danger of closing its doors fell like a bombshell into the public consciousness, and though Mr. Paul D. Cravath's later statement on behalf of the Board of Directors expresses the belief that through a shortening of the season from twenty-four to sixteen weeks and a general cut in salaries of 25 percent the production of opera will be assured for next year, the deeper implications of the original announcement remain unaffected. Indeed the danger which faces the future of opera in New York is emphasized by the final paragraph in Mr. Cravath's statement in which he hints that it is the intention of the directors to accept Mr. Rockefeller's invitation to move the opera to Radio City, as soon as the new auditorium there is completed. The American public, and this means really the American public and not merely its infinitesimal section of music lovers, had come to regard the Broadway house of song almost as a symbol of the permanence of our national institutions, and certainly as a symbol of the permanence of our moneyed aristocarcy. That it should close definitely seemed about as remote a possibility as the closing of the stock exchange itself, with the gold of which it had been nurtured for half a century; nurtured, not in the sense that its deficits had been made good, for between 1911 and 1930 it had no deficits to speak of and often a surplus, but in the sense that New York society, whose roots are in the exchange, made it its Mecca. Almost alone of the opera houses of the world, the Metropolitan under Signor Gatti-Casazza has paid its way, which is certainly a tribute to the power of that society, however much less it may mean as a proof of the great public's love of opera. That the opera season next year should be curtailed because of the half-million deficit of the last two years was to be expected. Even if the season had been omitted with the promise that when times improved opera would be resumed, the decision might have been understandable, though scarcely praiseworthy, for opera houses have closed their doors before only to open them a few years later to even greater brilliance. If the Metropolitan's backers had decided to give New York an operatic moratorium until times are better and taxes less, the institution might very well go on its way as it has in the past for another quarter-century at least. Such a closing might be humiliating but it would not be fatal. But to have it absorbed as simply one of the activities of that colossal, though belated, offspring of our era of super-expansion, Radio City, would be calamitous, unless Demos becomes, what he never has been yet, a patron of opera.

Of course there will be those to hail the trial. Opera given in Radio City will be an appendage of the radio, and in the radio democracy has found its expression as never before. Opera given there will have to appeal, not to the audience of three or four thousand people who may hear it in its auditorium, but to the millions who will listen in. It must appeal to the farmer of Nebraska, to the fruit-grower of California, to the miner of Montana. The believers in the democratization of art will insist that by bringing opera to the millions, the millions will be educated in it and its art revivified. And he must be blind indeed who will deny that there is need of both these things. It is certain that the musical taste of our people is at present atrocious, and the art of opera, if not of music generally, in its decadence. For the last quarter-century the Metropolitan, through no fault of Signor Gatti-Casazza or his Board of Directors, has been an operatic museum. The great operas of the past have been given, on the whole worthily enough—but they have been operas of the past. Since the production of "L'Amore dei Tre Re" there has been given on its stage no new work bearing the mark of creative genius, and without new works of creative genius every art tends first to become the *mere playground of technique, and then to lose even that* virtue. Creation is the only antidote to dry-rot. An art which has no roots in cultural soil, which draws no sustenance from the age, which means nothing as an expression of national will, is an art without meaning. And if the Metropolitan's backers decide to go on next year as before, or even to take a short vacation, the believers in the democratization of opera will insist that the death of the Opera House has only been postponed.

That there is danger of this even the fondest lover of the Metropolitan that was will not deny. What he will assert is that there is far greater danger in its absorption into a theatre which is a mere adjunct to the radio. That such a theatre should exist he will admit is excellent; but that the Metropolitan should be this theatre he will insist is intolerable. He will point to the fact that opera, even when it has had its roots in the national soil, has always been aristocratic in essence. It has been supported either by wealthy patrons or by governmental aid. Patronage of some sort it has always needed, the great bulk of the people remaining aloof and even uninterested. Opera has been the playground, the fairyland if you will, of the few. The fact of its being made mechanically audible to the masses may cause a revolution in its appeal. The radio may be the magic wand which will bring the people whole-heartedly to it. But that is for the future to show, and somehow art has a way of coming to birth irrespective of any deliberate intention. It is born when and because the spirit of man is there to give it birth. It is certainly exceedingly improbable that the standard of operatic performances under the flag of radio, and given in surroundings which are the direct expression of the very falsity of values which have sunk the world into its present morass, will equal those which have obtained at the Metropolitan. That an opera house presided over, or even influenced, by the spirit which created that mastodonic masterpiece of bunk at Seventh Avenue and Fiftieth Street, can ever possess the dignity of the Metropolitan is incredible. If Radio City wants an opera house, let it have one. If it finds a public, if it trains new singers, if it educates the American people, it will do a needed work. Perhaps it will even induce Americans to write operas by offering them a place to be produced. But let us not lose the Metropolitan. If it continues to be a museum it will be because the creative spirit is lacking in America and in the world. That spirit will not be brought into being by radio or any other mechanical contrivance; it will come only from the heart of man.

Perhaps, too, when all is said and done, too much stress has been placed on the question whether or not opera can ever be indigenous to America. There are at present no signs that an American school of opera is rising or is likely to rise. The signs are all the other way—what American operas we have are pale reflections of European ones. But there is no need for our humiliation—there is no new school of opera anywhere in the world today. It is this which is withering the performances and drying up interest in them. But this is not the fault of the system. It is the fault of the time. The whole of past experience with opera in America has been that our public will go to opera only when it is given with the greatest singers and with the greatest possible amount of luxury. Call its appeal snobbish, or social, or what you will, it is the spirit which has made possible the Metropolitan in the past, and which has offered to our public one theatre at least where the present can be forgotten and the past relived. For

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the Metropolitan has been the premier opera house of the world. What it has presented has been exotic, yet it has given joy, and it has furnished the one institution on the North American continent where a standard repertory has been maintained. And it has been maintained by the power of social patronage.

From Mr. Cravath's statement it is evident that the Metropolitan's backers are willing to put their hands at least part way into their pockets in making up a guarantee fund. This is, as far as it goes, encouraging. But it is well to realize that up to the end of the present season, with the exception of the years 1909 and 1910, these backers have backed the opera only by the original investment in their boxes, an investment which they made half a century ago. Not since Signor Gatti assumed sole charge in 1910 has anyone of them been asked to pay a single cent to make up a deficit, the half-million deficit of the last two seasons having been made up entirely from a reserve fund put aside by Signor Gatti from the profits of former seasons, and by the 10 percent reduction in this year's salaries. When one considers that the backers of the Chicago Opera Company as well as those who support all the great symphony orchestras have paid out millions of dollars to make up deficits in the last twenty years, the hesitancy of the Metropolitan's box-holders shows what must have been the extent of their personal losses since the depression. But that they should allow the Metropolitan to be absorbed into Radio City ought to be incredible.

King's Riddle

We live too much with mirth and ease
And all the silken things,
Our bodies fed how can we know
The joy of kings?

The high crown, the slow steps,
The foe behind the wall;
A quick lunge, a bright flash,
The red rainfall.

And tragedy on tragedy
To break small hearts in twain,
To farrow them and furrow them
Till they grow great again.

For if a man through all his days
Be never on the cross,
How shall he know the high from low,
The clear gold from the dross?

Far better be a king cast out
With thistles for a crown,
Than be a little millionaire
And always sleep on down.

I'd rather be that old Lear
Throned on a log,
Than dwell in some tall, golden house
And die like a dog.

For out of tears is born anew,
With laughter-starry eyes,
A lad who holds his quaking sides
And shakes the towered skies.

FRANCIS BEAUCHESNE THORNTON.

COMMUNICATIONS

TOWN AND COUNTRY FAMILIES

Hingham, Mont.

TO the Editor: In the March 2, 1932, issue of your magazine Dr. Edgar Schmiedeler, director of the Catholic Rural Life Conference and chairman of the Publicity Committee of the same organization, analyzes the contrast between the urban and the rural family—"a sorry one"—that does not flatter the urban civilization. He states that in spite of the fact that that contrast is disparaging to the urban civilization, "we go on trumpeting its vaunted progress to the sky." And he terminates by asking these three pertinent questions: "Will we continue to do so [trumpeting the progress of urban civilization] or will we halt before it is too late? . . . Will we try to stem the tide [of people from the country to the city] or even to reverse the current? Or will we keep on drifting downward?"

As pastor of close to 300 families scattered over 6,400 square miles of Montana prairie, with whose conditions I am intimately familiar, and as a practical student of their problems and difficulties and the measures being taken to solve those problems and remedy those difficulties, I shall attempt to give Dr. Schmeideler's questions the answers suggested by my position.

Yes, we will continue to trumpet the dubious progress of urban civilization and will not halt before it is too late. The reason is that if we exclude a very few even among the rural pastors, there is a tremendous general lack of interest in rural problems and a general misconception of the degree of intelligence of our farmer, and little or nothing is being done to dispel the one and the other. I know priests who have been ten, fifteen and more years in rural parishes, who do not know the difference between a Durock and a Poland China or what a Wyandot is, and will refer to the farmers as a "dumb lot." With few exceptions the Catholic press seems to consider it beneath its dignity to discuss mere farm problems. Our most influential periodicals will devote regularly page after page of their space to topics whose sole practical result is to display the erudition of those who discuss them, but will seldom devote one column to bring to the attention of their readers the importance of our basic industry and its more pressing problems. In all that has been done so far to bring into our national life the program of social reconstruction, defined by the Holy Father's encyclical, "Quadragesimo Anno," not once, to my knowledge, have the farmers been taken into consideration.

No, we will not try to stem the tide and, much less, reverse the current. There is but one way to accomplish it, but there seems to be no one to apply it in our country, or even to bring it to the attention of those who alone can apply it. I refer to the organization of the agricultural classes on a national scale. That organization can be accomplished, or at least initiated, only by the Church, since our Church alone has the requisite uniform educational influence all over the country; but we will continue to leave that task to the government, whose efforts in that direction must of necessity be barren of fruits until it will be too late. Reasons? Well, the farmer does not trust the government—and rightly—for politicians have always exploited him and he realizes it. In its present state of organization (or disorganization) the government will protect rather the promoters of marketing practices that are most harmful to the farmers, such as short selling, unwarranted rumors, false reports, unrestricted gambling. It develops a source of credit for the farmer which is inadequate and usurious. It is inadequate because it curtails the farmer's borrowing power. It is usurious because the farmer must pay not only 5 or 5½ percent but also the expensive main-

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tenance of the credit machinery. Consider this: To administer the $50,000,000 fund Congress appropriated to be loaned to the farmer, Secretary of Agriculture Hyde appointed Henry S. Clarke, a Chicago banker, as national director with a salary of $600 a month, and numerous regional agents with salaries of $400 a month. It is not known how long they will draw those salaries, how many sub-agents will be employed and what salaries they will be paid, but in the light of previous experience it is reasonable to say that the $2,750,000 interest will not suffice to pay the expenses of handling the fund, so that the balance will have to be paid from tax money. Finally, the farmer knows full well that the activities of the government have increased his taxes 172 percent, while the valuation of his property has shrunk 20 percent and his income has decreased a little over 20 percent in the same time. No, if we leave to the government the national organization of the farmer, we will not stem the tide or, much less, reverse the current. And so we come to the answer to Dr. Schmiedeler's third question.

Yes, we will keep on drifting downward—unless and until the Catholic Church, as such, will espouse the cause of the agricultural classes in our country as she did in Belgium; unless and until the Catholic periodicals cease looking with disdain upon problems that are vital even if they arise from the lowly earth and the malodorous farmyard. With every day of delay we are gathering momentum on our downward drift so that it is safe to say that in two more years like 1930 and 1931, the wholesome rural family life, of which Dr. Schmiedeler writes so well, will be a thing of the past in great areas of our country. For one, I know that if conditions continue as they are and nothing is done, my good people cannot be expected to keep up a futile struggle, and our several years of sacrifice will have been practically wasted through no fault of the land or of our own. When great agricultural areas of our country will have reverted to the status of burdensome missionary districts, or of something still worse, the disdain of our leaders, of our periodicals, and of our city brethren will perhaps lose some of its present complacency, but it will be *too late!*

REV. A. J. MARTINS, O. Praem.

BEHIND THE BALANCED BUDGET

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editor: Will you permit me to congratulate you on the publication in your issue of April 6 of the article by Virgil Jordan entitled "Behind the Balanced Budget"? In my opinion this is one of the best written and most useful productions that has appeared in THE COMMONWEAL—or in any other periodical—for a long time. The language which Dr. Jordan uses in challenging the prevalent business and political opinion of the subject with which he deals is indeed severe, but it is fully justified by the amazing shallowness of our dominant thinking, or lack of thinking. His description of the current errors in terms drawn from the operations of the stock markets is particularly entertaining and effective.

The fundamental consideration in Dr. Jordan's argument is that of the existing purchasing power of the community. As the main cause of the depression was and has continued to be the insufficiency of purchasing to take off the market all or nearly all of the current product or the contemplated product, so the only adequate means of bringing about even the beginning of an improvement will have to be an increase in purchasing. Hence, any fiscal policy which reduces purchasing power can only make matters worse. Attempts to balance the budget through the imposition of taxes on consumption, as in the sales tax, happily defeated in the House of Representatives, reduction of the salaries of federal employees and abolition of federal agencies or services through the discharge of employees, are all of this harmful character. They all diminish the demand for goods and are, to that extent, "bad for business." As Dr. Jordan observes, this is the time for governments to borrow money and to spend money, on the one hand increasing the demand for goods and on the other, decreasing the supply of surplus savings which are vainly seeking an investment in an already overdeveloped capital structure. In brief, the problem before the country is to put more purchasing power into the hands of those who would expend it immediately for consumption goods, and to take some money from those who will not spend it in this way—either because they already have all the consumption goods that they need or because they prefer hoarding in some form to immediate spending for comforts or luxuries.

"The budget must be balanced." This is a mere slogan, which unfortunately is working overtime as a substitute for analysis and thinking. In one sense, it is a futile platitude; in the only sense which yields any concrete meaning, it is misleading and false. The budget of any government is always balanced in the sense that the annual income is equal to the annual expenditure. Money cannot be paid out unless it has come in. The vital questions are the source of the income and the time of balancing. The current cant implies that the budget must be balanced immediately and without borrowing. Both assumptions are without foundation. Every solvent business man must balance his budget, but he does not think it necessary to balance it in any given year at the beginning of July. He may prudently effect the balance between income and outgo at the end of December. And he may have good reason to produce this result by borrowing against the future.

Similarly, the federal budget need not be balanced without borrowing this year or next year. It was not balanced in that way during the Great War. At that time, the federal government borrowed, through the sale of Liberty Bonds, against its taxation possibilities not only for the following two or three or five years, but for the following twenty, twenty-five and thirty years. It can use the same method now. In so far as the budget cannot be completely balanced through taxes upon incomes and inheritances and other taxes which will take the maximum from those who do not want to spend money for immediate consumption and the minimum from those who do, the required remainder can and should be obtained through the sale of bonds or treasury certificates; in other words, by borrowing. This is the only way in which the federal government can avoid intensifying the depression through its fiscal legislation.

As Dr. Jordan intimates, the federal government should moreover make a positive contribution toward business recovery. In line with his argument concerning the budget and with his analysis of the depression, he would favor a huge federal appropriation for public works to produce great increase of purchasing power. No manipulation of credit or credit facilities, however negatively beneficial this may be, will be able to increase materially the sale of goods. Without an increase in the sale of goods, the beginning of an upward trend in business cannot take place. Hence it is the obvious duty of Congress to enact the bill introduced by Senator La Follette providing for the issue of $5,500,000,000 of bonds in order to inaugurate and carry through an adequate program of public works. The assumption that the credit of the national government, resting as it does upon our almost unlimited resources, could not support these vast borrowings is palpably without merit. To be sure, a higher rate of interest would have to be paid on large issues

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of federal bonds now than would have been required two years ago when the administration was first urged to recommend to Congress a program of public works to prevent further spread and deepening of the depression. Nevertheless, the bonds could be sold now and the interest could be paid, when it comes due, out of the increased tax resources of the country derived from increased production. Unless this remedy is adopted at the present session of Congress, the depression will be still deeper and wider when Congress meets again next December, and the incomes of business men who are now so fearful of increased taxes will be even smaller than they are today.

Rev. John A. Ryan.

New York, N. Y.

To the Editor: I have read with much interest the article of Mr. Virgil Jordan, "Behind the Balanced Budget," in your April 6 number.

The panacea which Mr. Jordan offers to bring us once again into the land of "milk and honey" evidently can be stated in a nutshell from one of Mr. Jordan's sentences, which is herewith quoted: "At no time, and surely not during depression, is any public expenditure which provides employment and puts surplus or unused purchasing power into consumers' pockets unproductive." Is this not the identical economic theory held by Louis XIV, when his régime spent the public funds for digging ditches and then refilling them? It has always been my recollection that Louis XIV did not meet with any outstanding success in this venture, at least I am sure he did not owe his niche in the hall of fame to his soundness as an economist. But perhaps Mr. Jordan can explain.

F. L. Andrews.

RELIGION IN THE CURRICULUM

St. Louis, Mo.

To the Editor: The statements of the Reverend Doctor Rybrook of Green Bay in his communication published in The Commonweal of March 16 seems to me to be particularly significant. Evidence that religion is in some cases not dominating the instruction given in the Catholic school comes to light annoyingly in the case not only of professional schools, which Dr. Rybrook mentions, but also high schools and colleges.

A situation not exactly uncommon in Catholic colleges and universities is that in which an instructor, a Catholic layman or even a member of a religious order, has had his training in a non-Catholic institution and on becoming an instructor in a Catholic one, builds the courses he gives from notes and bibliographies he has got from his non-Catholic professors. This is unfortunate if his subject be one such as literature, history, sociology, economics, education and the like, for at the best he is often silent instead of eloquent about the phases of his subject which concern the Church. But the harm does not stop there; such an instructor is often a party to misrepresenting the Church by assigning (innocently perhaps) readings and references containing errors that have been refuted by Catholic authorities with whom he is unfamiliar. In extenuation of the fault of such an instructor (one often too busy to do much scholarly searching in preparation for his daily work) it might be noted that Catholic scholars are in some part responsible for his plight by being apathetic in having their publications listed in the bibliographies issued by the various learned societies of this country and Europe, and thus brought to the notice of non-Catholic as well as Catholic workers in such fields.

Anne Connell Walsh.

BOOKS

Mr. Baker's Wilson

Life and Letters of Woodrow Wilson, by Ray Stannard Baker. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Incorporated. Volumes III and IV, $10.00.

A MORE penetrating and critical analysis of the character and work of Woodrow Wilson will some day be written, but a more delightfully intimate portrait of the former President than that provided by Mr. Baker is difficult to imagine. The work covers the years from 1910 through 1914. The third volume takes up the last year of Wilson's presidency at Princeton, his campaign for the governorship of New Jersey, his work as governor, and his nomination and successful campaign for the Presidency. The fourth volume covers the first year in the White House. Other volumes are in preparation. It is unnecessary for the reader to be familiar with the first two volumes in order to understand and appreciate the third and fourth. Each volume constitutes a separate story. It is said that Mr. Baker had tons of manuscript and materials which were used in preparation of this work. When such is the case it is not the easiest task to put the materials together in a continuous and coherent fashion, nor to select the important from the inconsequential matter. There can be no question of Mr. Baker's having accomplished the task. Without decreasing interest one may read again and again of the fight against the bosses in New Jersey, of the wooing and winning of the Republican Senate of New Jersey at a stag party in which Wilson, scholar, recently emancipated professor, does a cake walk with a political opponent, of his tour of the West in 1911 to present himself and his views to the progressives, and of the delicate maneuvers of the friends of Bryan and of Wilson to bring these leaders together. The differences in character between these two men is not altogether unknown, but few have expressed those differences as well as Mr. Baker when he says:

"Two men more different than Wilson and Bryan in character, in temperament, in training could not easily be found. Wilson was preëminently intellectual, Bryan emotional—types never easily sympathetic; Wilson was delicately wrought physically, easily reaching the limits of his strength—Bryan, a pattern of robustness, never knew what it was to be tired; Wilson was sensitive, shy, imaginative—Bryan, a lover of crowds and shouting conventions, numbered his political friends by the thousands; Wilson was the careful, accurate, scholarly worker, every letter like copper-plate, every document dated—Bryan, swift and careless, conducted his indiscriminate correspondence from hotel writing-stands, and edited his paper 'by writing on his knee' in railroad trains; a stubby pencil served him well, and often he saved time by signing his name with a rubber stamp; Wilson was a thorough, deep, studious reader—Bryan snatched his knowledge from newspapers and conversation, and read almost no books, except the Bible."

There are thrills in abundance in the accounts of the Baltimore convention, the fight on big business, the campaign against Taft and Roosevelt, the struggle for tariff reform and the enactment of the Federal Reserve Act.

The common impression that Woodrow Wilson was a cold, reserved and detached person is effectively dispelled through the numerous intimate and affectionate letters quoted throughout these volumes. In these letters Wilson is revealed as a man cherishing the counsel, the companionship and above all the affection of his friends. To Dr. Hiram Woods, a classmate at Princeton, he writes:

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"My dear Hiram: Delightful as it was the other night to see you and the other old fellows at the dinner, it was tantalizing merely to sit at the table and look at you and have no chance to have personal and intimate chats.

"You may be sure that I shall never desire you in any circumstances to drop the old epithets of intimacy. On the contrary I should miss them very sorely if you did. I have now at last at least a little leisure in which to turn to the men I have known and loved so long and express to them my deep and continuing affection."

He feels depressed by the thought of the separation from friends, quiet social life and scholarly pursuits which entrance upon public life has brought to him. His correspondence shows us the Wilson who would, if he could follow his own desires, spend a tranquil life surrounded by his family and his friends or who in his travels would prefer the beauty and quiet of the English lake country.

Despite his desire for a life free of turmoil, we see him fighting furiously for an ideal; in those battles he knew neither compromise nor surrender. His success in the battles of his early career against the entrenched forces of corrupt politics and business will never cease to be an inspiration to fearless leaders who refuse to compromise with systems, no matter how traditional, which frustrate the public will and destroy the foundation of the state. As a politician Wilson was a rank amateur, yet it is questionable if any man in American public life ever broke as many seasoned politicians. There came a time when aided by the waning physical strength of the man and the war weariness of the people, the old guard of politics brought him down in defeat; but his victories still remain to testify to the invincibility of integrity in high office.

The author ascribes much of Wilson's stubborn devotion to ideals to his Scotch-Irish ancestry. A typical racial virtue, however, is as difficult to isolate as the influenza germ, according to our sociologists. It nevertheless cannot be denied that Wilson stands out as the personification of integrity in comparison with those bosses and machine leaders, all too many of whom were pure unhyphenated Irish, who fought him.

The work is more eulogistic than scientifically objective. Yet Mr. Baker has made a distinct contribution to political biography.

JEROME G. KERWIN.

The Poets Stir

The Yoke of Thunder, by Robert P. Tristram Coffin. New York: The Macmillan Company. $1.50.

Poems: 1928-1931, by Allen Tate. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.00.

AN EDITOR whose fate it is to sift from carloads of poetry manuscript the few lyrics he can publish to advantage may be pardoned for asserting in public that the sight of the average book of verse is, to him, hardly more ingratiating than the shadow of the tax collector. More bad poems are being written every day in the United States than the uninitiated can imagine; and it is a sad fact that most of these poems are mailed off promptly to editorial offices. So much by way of the necessary prolegomena. The two books named above have interested me deeply. Though the compliment is not worth much, it is at least one for the sincerity of which I can vouch.

Mr. Coffin believes in definiteness. Almost every poem he writes seems to have originated in a glance—in a swift, intuitive peering into something, over the inner or outer contours of

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NEXT WEEK

LEADERSHIP AND THE MASSES, by William Franklin Sands, is a stirring dissertation, deserving of respectful attention whether or not one agrees with it, on the necessity for an aristocracy of leadership. The masses, he observes, "have become the careless, thoughtless, spendthrift heirs of a civilization built by aristocracies; who fill all public places with their crowds; to whom all governments cater, all publishers pander; to whom all 'salesmanship' is addressed." With impressive logic Mr. Sands addresses himself to the thesis: "There is no leadership but by the 'best'—the *aristoi*. 'Mass' education does not produce the best. It produces first, a general mediocrity, and with ever-increasing rapidity: decadence." . . . THE HAPSBURGS RETURN, by Charles Cunningham, is most timely and describes the movement for the elevating to the throne of the young Archduke Otto to weld again into a strong whole the present halves of the Austro-Hungarian chain. Behind this enterprise, Mr. Cunningham, sees the strong hand of France. . . . OUR SOUTHWESTERN PROBLEM, by Bishop Francis C. Kelley, Bishop of Oklahoma City, describes graphically the far from peaceful state of our internal economic empire of oil. This is an industry that employs approximately two million persons, and which indirectly contributes to the employment of countless more. A solution of its special problems is imperative and Bishop Kelley suggests the lines along which such a solution may take place. . . . PLEASE TAKE ME FISHING, SAINT JAMES, by Helen Walker Homan, is another of the very human, and at the same time soundly scholarly and informative, papers by this charming writer on one of those in whom Our Lord reposed special trust in the bringing of His kingdom on earth, as well as in heaven.

which he does not then coax his eyes to wander. Children gaze just that way; so do lynx-eyed old fellows who live in the open. But of course Mr. Coffin happens always to be looking for a particular thing. What this is he explains in a long opening poem:

> "For me to know the country matters well
> Is to go with Dante into hell. . . .
> A looking on red ants about a bird
> Whose wings will never once again be stirred,
> A visit to the spiders' catacombs
> Where skeletons hang bleached in hecatombs. . . .
> And still this is not all. If it were all,
> I could build about me such a wall
> As would not let a single midge inside
> To scrape a thin sonata as it died. . . .
> The only angels there are left to know
> Are fruit trees with their blossoms heaped like snow;
> And the briars have on every stem
> The colors of the New Jerusalem."

Nature is, therefore, the composite warring of heaven and hell. Death grapples with life, death is life as it itself dies. The philosophic truth here conveyed is not new, though of course science has modified its disillusionment with what used to be called romantic pantheism. How Mr. Coffin has utilized the almost algebraic reality-formula which is his eye lens is certainly the important poetic thing. In "Crystal Moment," possibly the finest lyric in the present collection, a buck pursued by hounds swims for safety, and the poet sees "Life and death upon one tether." Many obscure, often ugly creatures —the starfish, the marsh-spider, the bat, even the jelly-fish— have something, whether of triangle or rhythm, which argues "quintessential law."

The clean-cut, vigorous, if occasionally (to me) overmetaphorized couplets and quatrains of Mr. Coffin's muse are definitely and beautifully his. He learned to use them relatively long ago, but the increased sureness manifest in this volume is ample proof that the poet has not wrongly estimated himself. If now and then we are reminded of a possible debt to Mr. Robinson, both in the treatment of persons and in the employ of idealistic motif, individuality nevertheless abides. One's question is only whether this poetry can avoid repeating itself in the future. Has Professor Coffin reached the end of one tether? Meanwhile, however, nobody excepting an idiot will put this book down contemptuously.

For Mr. Tate, poetry is an instrument for serving one definite purpose. Perhaps it resembles, as he uses it, an English horn or an oboe—excellent devices which are, however, not designed to put babies to sleep or make girls' eyes sparkle. The theory that poetry has its own object (even its own objects), through serving which aesthetics becomes a practised philosophy of order, cannot be discussed here. Doubtless Mr. Tate does belong, with marked differences, to the Eliot school, major theme of which is the antique maxim,

> "Man wants but little here below,
> Nor wants that little long."

This wisdom has its own savor, which energetic poets can ally with religion and doctrine. To my mind Mr. Eliot has made this task a little too easy for himself and suggested occasionally that his interesting fabrications are verities.

We here have to do, however, with Mr. Tate, in whom something of the Eliot procedure is manifest. Nevertheless I think that he is potentially a more significant poet than the

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present editor of the *Criterion,* and by reason of the present volume a far more significant poet than he has hitherto been. "Sonnets of the Blood," which first appeared in *Poetry* some time ago, have a remarkable kinship with Donne. Indeed I am inclined to think that they are, of all the fruits of the much-heralded "back to Donne" business, the only really solid crop I have seen. Generally these elliptically poetized meditations on death seem abominably posed; here they do, for all the concessions made to a hardly necessarily right theory of verse, ring honest. But to my mind Mr. Tate's "Causerie" (inspired by a young comedienne's public bath) brought more to think about than anything else in his book. Here are a few lines:

> "In Christ we have lived, on the flood of Christ borne up,
> Who now is a precipitate flood of silence,
> We a drenched wreck off an imponderable shore;
> A jagged cloud is our memory of shore
> Whereon we figure hills below ultimate ranges.
> You cannot plot the tendency of man,
> Whither it leads is not mysterious
> In the various grave, but whence the impulse
> To lust for the apple of apples on Christ's tree,
> To desire in the eye, to penetrate your sleep,
> Perhaps to catch in unexpected leaves
> The hanging incentive of your absolute suspicions?
> Over the mountains, the last barrier, you'd spill
> These relics of your sires in a pool of sleep,
> The sun being drained."

If that is not precisely melody made easy, it is worth some care. Poetry will be redeemed from fate not by the stenographers but by its creators.

GEORGE N. SHUSTER.

An Enigmatic Ruler

Emperor and Mystic: The Life of Alexander I of Russia, by Francis Gribble. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Incorporated. $5.00.

THIS is a very interesting if superficial book. Interesting, because it tells us in a fascinating manner the story of one of the most complicated personalities that ever existed; superficial, because it does not enter into the psychology of its hero. Alexander I has been an enigma for many people. He was undoubtedly brilliant and fascinating, but he lacked stability, and his tendencies toward mysticism were most likely the result of the hereditary predisposition of the Romanoff family toward unbalanced views of things they failed to understand.

Napoleon I had called Alexander "a Greek of the Lower Empire," which was a severe but very true judgment. All through his life he was indifferent to the moral consequences of his actions, disregarding, from the political as well as from the private point of view, all the notions of good and evil upon which society is built, and without which it cannot exist. Like all the members of his unbalanced family, he imagined that the world owed him everything, while he had absolutely no obligations toward it.

Alexander ascended the throne after the murder of his father, Paul I, in which crime it was suspected that he had had a share. Some claimed that he might have prevented the assassination from taking place, and in this way was more or less responsible for it, even if not immediately concerned in it. It is certain that it changed him considerably, and directed his mind toward mysticism. This was long before the appearance of Madame

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de Krudener, whose strange teachings he enthusiastically accepted, not so much because of her personal fascinations as because of his eagerness to find comfort for his restless soul, and release from the doubts constantly troubling him.

Mr. Gribble has not properly appreciated the real influence exercised over Alexander's mind by Madame Narichkine. Undoubtedly he loved her passionately, much more than she had ever loved him, but all the while he feared she might induce him to make some political move he would regret. Mr. Gribble's statement that Marie Narichkine never tried to interfere in matters of state is not exact. There were before the Revolution in certain Russian families, documents clearly establishing the contrary. She cleverly hid from the world the part she had played in regard to Alexander's decision to enter the lists against Napoleon.

As for the Empress Elizabeth, her personality and her relations with Alexander are an enigma. If the Czartoryski family would open its archives to the public, one would undoubtedly learn much about her which is yet unknown. It is a case of "let whoever is without sin, throw the first stone."

The famous question as to whether Alexander I really died in Taganrog, or managed to disappear in order to end his days in prayer and penance, is treated by the author with great care, and regard for its many improbabilities. The fantastic story of his disappearance can only be traced to the inherent tendency of Russians to build up improbable tales out of nothing. There were living at the time of the Revolution old people who remembered the circumstances attending the death of Alexander, having heard them from their parents who were in Taganrog when he died there. His body was exposed for two days to all those who wanted to look at it; but it was embalmed too late, with the usual consequences, and the coffin had to be closed. In Mr. Gribble's account of the emperor's end he says that the Empress Elizabeth did not accompany his body to St. Petersburg. This is inexact. She started with it for the capital, but was taken ill and died on the way.

That Alexander I had ideas of abdicating in favor of his brother is well known, though it is doubtful whether he would ever have done so. But his intimations of this intention may account for the legend of his ending his days as a hermit in the wilds of Siberia.

CATHERINE RADZIWILL.

Representation

The Written Constitution and the Unwritten Attitude, by Charles E. Merriam. New York: Richard R. Smith, Incorporated. $1.00.

THIS volume contains three lectures by Professor Merriam: the first on the written constitution; the second upon the nation, state and city under the constitution; the third, the constitution and the political parties. All three lectures, snugly packed into less than ninety pages, were delivered at Rochester University, under the James C. Cutler Foundation.

The most interesting feature of these lectures is to be found in the presentation of the facts and the language used to convey the views of the lecturer. Dr. Merriam has learned that the perpetual use of technical phrases of legalistic diction is one of the prime causes for the gradual but persistent decline of the audiences at modern lectures. Thus it is pleasing to record that his prose is vivid but precise, his periods illuminating as well as instructive, his subjects admirably chosen to intrigue the inquirer as also to interest the student.

To say that the book is stimulating and thought-provoking

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is to use a hackneyed phrase, but none the less, it is an accurate description of the matter handled, especially upon such aspects of the constitution as deal with the representation of areas, and with their contribution in state, municipal and federal taxation.

Those who live in the sparsely populated areas of Wyoming, Utah, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Arizona, will do well to compel their state leaders to consider their own position as against that of the cities of New York, Chicago, Philadelphia. Each of these cities has a much larger population, exceeds in wealth, pays much more in taxes than the above states. But each of these states has the same number of senators as the states of New York and Illinois.

There must be some proportion worked out, if the sense of harmony in representation is to remain. Refusal to consider this will mean the division of the states of Illinois, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, with the consequent doubling, perhaps trebling, of the senatorial delegation from the divided states. It is well to remember this passage in a speech by Charles Stewart Parnell, made in the House of Commons, upon the condition of Ireland: "No one has the right or should have the power to mark the bounds or set the confines to the progress which a community or nation demands or makes apparent by its vitality and industry."

This sentence stirred the mind of many when Parnell uttered it. Dr. Merriam in this volume reiterates the thought it contains.

BOYD-CARPENTER.

Jobs for Everybody

The Olney Redmond Plan—A Job for Every Man. Schenectady, New York: Published by the author.

IN THIS well-printed book of nearly three hundred pages, Mr. Olney Redmond, a Schenectady business man, sets forth a bold plan for vast public works to provide work for everybody and thus to set and keep the wheels of industry moving. Criticizing the plans for stabilization, he demands provisions for jobs; pointing out that planning as heretofore suggested provides for those at work, he asks what is to become of the millions already displaced. His answer is a vast nation-wide, coördinated plan for public enterprises by cities, states and the nation, which he calls a "Progress Prosperity Plan." He marshals the facts of the work there is to do in this unfinished nation. Roads, streets, housing, afforestation, flood control, water-power development, bridges, grade-crossing removal, recreation facilities, he points out, call for billions of dollars worth of work now. All of this work, planned in advance by a national commission with the coöperation of states and cities, would provide jobs directly and indirectly. The financing of these works, it is maintained, can be accomplished readily through bond issues.

The reviewer believes that the author is on the right track; that after stabilization has done its work, there will be millions to be provided for otherwise; that these millions can be employed only through public works; that billions of dollars worth of work is urgently needed in practicable projects for the safety and welfare of the country; and that a nation-wide coöperative plan, in which all agencies of government participate, is the only way to make a public works plan effective.

The boldness and magnitude of the plan may be its defeat, but not its refutation.

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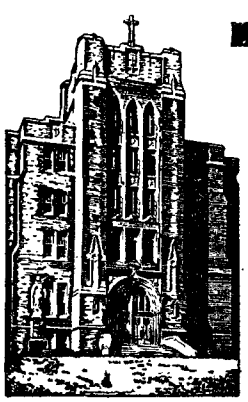

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Briefer Mention

The Vanity of Dogmatizing, by Joseph Glanvil; with a note by Moody E. Prior. New York: Published for the Facsimile Text Society by Columbia University Press.

THOUGH Joseph Glanvil became a voluminous and much-lauded writer, nothing else by his pen retains the significance that still attaches to his first book, published in 1661. This the Facsimile Text Society has now reissued in an exact and attractive duplicate of the first edition. It is a curious little volume which the collector of English literature will wish to see and own. Glanvil attacks, in the guarded but barbed phraseology of his time, the Aristotelians of Oxford, whom he accuses of promulgating a "doctrine of words," which is dedicated to many errors and is, above all, useless for "making discoveries." Chapter XIX is remarkable for prophecies which turned out to be anticipations. He said that in an age to come "it may be as ordinary to buy a pair of wings to fly into remotest regions as now to buy a pair of boots to ride a journey," and forecast the use of "sympathetic conveyances" to communicate with the Indies. His own doctrine, though religious (Glanvil was a divine), leans toward scepticism. In short, this is a fascinating and important little treatise in an attractive new edition.

The Memoirs of Benevenuto Cellini; translated by Robert Hobart Cust. New York: Duffield and Green. $3.50.

BENEVENUTO'S book keeps its place as a highly respected classic of the Renaissance, however imperfectly it may serve the uses of those who believe that literature must be educative in a not merely realistic way. For years Mr. Symonds's translation has been used in the ordinary popular reprint. If Mr. Cust offers a new version, it is because he feels that the verve of Cellini's Italian has never hitherto been caught in English, and also because he wishes to include material usually expurgated. There can be little question that his prose has life and aptness, but few will endorse the decision to include the whole of the original. The illustrations by Mr. James Daugherty are what one would expect from this dashing draughtsman, whose work tends to seem monotonously baroque to those who have seen considerable of it.

Fools and Folly, by Barbara Swain. New York: Columbia University Press. $3.00.

FOOLS are always with us. Miss Swain has devoted her attention to folly during the middle ages and the Renaissance, in a studious dissertation rich in French and Italian source-material. This is first-rate work.

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